

DOCTRINA ROMANENSIIUM

DE INVOCATIONE SANCTORUM

A Brief Enquiry into the Invocation of Saints

H. F. STEWART, B.D.

INTRODUCTION BY THE BISHOP OF SALISBURY

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Doctrina Romanensium De Invocatione Sanctorum

BEING A BRIEF ENQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPLES
THAT UNDERLIE THE PRACTICE OF THE
INVOCATION OF SAINTS

BY THE

REV. H. F. STEWART, B.D.

CHAPLAIN OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
AND EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY THE

BISHOP OF SALISBURY



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PREFACE

WHILE desiring to assume sole responsibility for all the defects of this Essay, whether in respect of form or matter, I must express my grateful thanks to several friends who have helped me in various ways during its preparation. To Mr. Edmund Bishop, from whom I gathered privately many hints and much information, some of which has since our correspondence been published in his own name; to Dr. Collins, Lord Bishop of Gibraltar, and Mr. W. H. Frere, for valuable advice and criticism; and above all to the Bishop of Salisbury (Dr. John Wordsworth), who has crowned the kindness of many years by associating himself with a piece of work which I sincerely wish were more worthy of his patronage.

H. F. STEWART.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Feb., 1907.

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INTRODUCTION

BY THE BISHOP OF SALISBURY

I HAVE great pleasure in writing a few words of introduction to the following pages. It was at my suggestion that Mr. Stewart, when Vice-Principal of our Theological College at Salisbury, kindly undertook to study and write upon the subject of the history of the Invocation of Saints. This is now a good many years ago, and I know that he has since devoted much time and thought to it, and that the Essay now published is the expansion and revision of several more tentative experiments in the same direction. That such an inquiry is needed cannot be doubted by any one who has watched the currents of theological speculation and even more the tendencies and practices of devotion in the Church of England.

The first step towards the revival of the practice of Invocation of departed Saints was taken some time back. It was propagated,

e. g., by what is in many ways a good book, *The Treasury of Devotion*. Many who have used that book in other ways have felt regret that it contained appeals or ejaculations desiring the intercessions of particular saints and angels.¹ They have regretted it because they knew that this was the first step historically, and likely again to be the first step, towards the practice of direct Invocation. They have felt that such an indirect method of obtaining prayers of individual intercessors was most unlikely to satisfy, for any length of time, those who desired such help. They have felt also that it was an unreasonable thing in itself to ask our heavenly Father to move some one else to move Him to do what we desired. The very fact that we were praying to God gave us an opportunity to ask Him directly for what we needed; and it is the character of Christian prayer to trust in the love of God, and it is part of the character of God to welcome His children's words when addressed immediately to Himself in Christ's name. There was indeed some authority for such "comprecation", as it was called, in the Liturgy of the Church of

¹ e. g. p. 10, ed. 1873: "May the intercessions of the holy Mother of God, of the Prophets, of the holy Apostles, of the Martyrs, help me! May all the Saints and elect of God pray for me, that I may be worthy with them to possess the Kingdom of God. Amen."

Jerusalem in the fourth century. But students of Church history knew that this century was by no means free from superstition, and that the practice had been only a compromise, and a compromise which had not been an effectual barrier against further, and those injurious, developments, ending in widespread mischief and error. It is one of the merits of the following Essay that it explains the genesis of popular feeling on the matter, that it exhibits it in different lights, and traces its origin both in Jewish and heathen thought as well as in the Christian experience of the glorious witness of the martyrs and confessors of the faith. We have in fact to struggle perpetually against a tendency of human nature compounded of many instincts, which has invaded Judaism and, I may add, Islam, as well as Christianity. In this tendency the best instinct is that of love and reverence to the departed and joy in thinking that they are nearer to God than ourselves. But it is insensibly combined with baser or less Christian instincts, such as a desire to fill up what we wrongly conceive to be the great gap or space between ourselves and God, indolence in the desire for Divine grace and the pursuit of virtue in our own persons, readiness to confide in the merits and kindness of our friends, fear of evil spirits, and lack of trust

in the love of God, the mediation of our Saviour, and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. These instincts, if allowed to have their course, bring back with them, in a more or less purified form, the habits of heathen thought about the unseen world in its relation to the seen. They have reintroduced among Christians belief in charms to protect self, belief in the efficacy of prayers before a special image or at a special spot, belief in special favouritism shown by patron saints to those who honour and court them, belief even in prayers to the injury of others, which men dare to address to a saint but would not dare to address to God, belief even, as in Sicily, in the intercessory power of criminals who have suffered capital punishment, and who are commemorated and invoked on the spots where they have been executed¹. All these things are manifest among Christians as among heathens, and they have been often lamented by the best men in the countries and provinces of Christendom where they have taken root.

¹ See an article headed "Soul-worship in Sicily" in the *Foreign Church Chronicle*, pp. 209-11, London, 1897. The following prayer is given on p. 211 as commonly addressed to such souls: "O ye exalted souls of headless bodies, three hanged, three beheaded, three drowned, unite all nine and go to the Eternal Father to tell Him of my sufferings. If you do not fulfil my wish I will not fulfil my rosary."

Attempt is now unfortunately being made among ourselves to take the second step, and to introduce direct invocations of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, particularly in the form of hymns, asking them, that is to say, for their prayers for special objects which we desire. The third step of asking them not only for prayers, but for definite objects to be given in answer to our prayers to them, is one which has followed and will follow close upon this—human nature being what it is. The motto of all who love the Church of England, as a true part of the Catholic Church, and who desire that it should be a witness to other Churches of Catholic truth, and should save the new Churches being founded in unchristian lands from old errors and excesses, must be in this matter, as in many others :

“Stay the beginnings: medicine comes too late.”

It is easy now for us to prevent superstition; but it is a weed of rank and rapid growth, and our people are as ready for it, in some places, as men of other nations. When once it has grown up, it is practically impossible to extirpate it, except by horrible violence. The official doctrine of the Church of Rome that such direct prayers addressed to Saints are always to be understood “mediante

eorum intercessione"¹ is little more than a paper doctrine. The practice of the people, and even sometimes of educated persons, is to think of the Saints as a sort of subordinate deities, easier to approach, more tender and compassionate, and less exacting, than God, to whom they can go with selfish requests which they would not dare to put up to Him. This was the position of things before the Reformation of the sixteenth century in this as in many other countries, and it is one which no sane man or woman can wish to see restored among us, not only because of the spiritual mischief which it brings, but also because of the brutal reaction which is certain to follow it, on the part of the puritan section of the community, if error becomes organized again as of yore. I, therefore, heartily welcome this Essay, both on account of its learning and thoughtfulness, and on account of the gentle

¹ See J. Perrone, S.J., *Praelectiones theologicae: de cultu Sanctorum*, c. 3, ed. Migne, vol. i, p. 1192, Paris, 1867. Cf. Bellarmine, *de Sanctorum beatitudine*, i. 17, who first lays down that we are only to ask the saints to pray for us, but then goes on to say that we may ask as far as words go: "Sancte Petre miserere mei, salva me, aperi mihi aditum caeli," &c., provided we understand "Salva me et miserere mei orando pro me, da mihi hoc et illud tuis precibus et meritis". The introduction of the idea of "merits", as giving the saint an independent position, is very characteristic, and is rightly regarded by Mr. Stewart as the key to the problem.

and kindly but firm way in which error is handled in it. I am deeply grieved that some able men of our communion, who are well aware of the dangers of superstition, should have given an impetus to Churchmen to take the second step in the process of the "cultus" of Saints. I hope that consideration of the material collected in this Essay, or accessible to them elsewhere, may lead them to pause, and, if necessary, to retrace their steps.

May I venture to commend to some of them who reverence the old teachers of the Church of England the sermon by Bishop Bull on *The Existence of Angels and their Nature*, being the eleventh in the first volume of his collected works? He deals well with the often repeated argument that invocations of Angels are as proper as requests from one Christian to another for the benefit of his prayers. He points out that the use of the former (and no doubt he is specially thinking of public worship) involves a peril of idolatry from which the latter is wholly free. He then goes on to argue *a fortiori* against the extension of the practice to the saints departed, who, as he observes, "are not yet equal to angels, nor shall be till the resurrection," and "of whom the holy Scriptures give us not the least assurance that they are ordinarily present with us, nay in divers

places seem not obscurely to teach the directly contrary”.

The fact is that human desire for converse with the unseen world has led men further than revelation warrants, and has produced developments inconsistent with the teaching of the New Testament.

The doctrine of the Communion of Saints, which the promoters of this “cultus” profess to desire to foster, is surely much better and more fully and more reasonably conceived by St. Paul than by the post-Nicene and mediæval Church. Paradise is not heaven, and the immediate vision of God is future not present. All Christians need pardon, all expect the judgement of the last day, which shall assign to each his or her place in eternal life. “We shall all stand before the judgement seat of God” (Rom. xiv. 10). “Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come . . . then shall each man have his praise from God” (1 Cor. iv. 5). Doubtless the whole Church, seen and unseen, is praying together for this consummation, and it may well make us more confident of the issue to know that the number of souls in Paradise is ever growing, and the volume of prayer for the Church therefore increasing. Such a prayer as this, “Hear, O Lord, our prayers, together with the prayers of our brethren who have gone

before," is a truly Christian form of comprehension. But the limit is overstepped when we single out particular persons, and ask for their prayers as particularly powerful with God, or even when we ask God to move them to pray for us because they are specially powerful. We are anticipating the judgement of the last day in a presumptuous manner, and all presumption brings its punishment in spiritual blindness and error.

I, therefore, heartily commend this Essay to its readers, knowing well the lofty and yet loving spirit in which it is written, and knowing how necessary the teaching it contains is for many men and women of our own day.

JOHN SARUM.

EPIPHANY,
1907.

INVOCATION OF SAINTS

I

THE THEORY OF MERIT: ITS HISTORY

THE Church of England has been repeatedly invited of recent years to return to the practice of the Invocation of Saints, which at the Reformation she deliberately omitted from her public worship, thereby, it is contended, foregoing a valuable portion of her heritage in the Catholic faith. By the expression "Invocation of Saints" is here meant the appeal to canonized Saints for the aid of their prayers to Almighty God. That the word Invocation may also, and in some cases undoubtedly does, connote direct appeal for gifts and benefits, appears from the phraseology used in the case of John Lambert, quoted below on p. 91. But for the purpose of this essay the former sense, which is also the current one¹, is that to which the reader's attention is directed, especially as it is found implied in public prayer and common worship.

¹ Cf. Mr. Darwell Stone, *The Invocation of Saints* (1903), p. 2.

The two chief grounds upon which the invitation to restore the practice is issued are, first, the deeper sense of the Communion of Saints which would result from its renewal, and secondly, the implied sanction on the part of the Church of England of some form of Invocation of Saints. For it is argued that what the Twenty-second Article of Religion condemns is the specifically Romish doctrine (*doctrina Romanensium . . . de invocatione sanctorum*) and not invocation of saints *per se*.

A consideration of the first of these grounds, the deepening of the sense of the Communion of Saints, may well be deferred until we have considered the second. For it may be questioned whether there really is any other doctrine of Invocation of Saints, so far as it can be described as doctrine, than that held by the unreformed Churches; it seems to be the fact that the doctrine or practice reposes upon, and is inextricably intertwined with, other doctrines which the reformed Church of England has definitely declined to hold; and it appears upon investigation that it is essentially an outgrowth of popular religion, and not the result of sober theological reflection. If these points are established, then the benefits arising from its rehabilitation must be proved to be of far-

reaching and overwhelming importance before loyal English churchmen will consent to stake their principles upon the hazard of immediate expediency.

Some words which occur in the Canon of the Latin Mass may serve as a text on which to base an argument; not that they are a final definition of the doctrine in question, but because they contain a notable expression of it. "Communicating with and reverencing in the first place the memory of the glorious ever Virgin Mary, as also of Thy blessed Apostles and Martyrs . . . and of all Thy Saints: through (? to) whose merits and prayers do Thou grant that in all things we may be defended by the help of Thy protection¹." The last sentence of this passage supplies the starting-point for our discussion; the co-ordination of *merita* with *preces* takes us to the heart of the matter. The Saints' right to intercede is here regarded as depending

¹ "Communicantes et memoriam venerantes inprimis gloriosae semper virginis Mariae . . . sed et beatorum apostolorum ac martyrum tuorum . . . et omnium sanctorum tuorum: quorum meritis precibusque concedas ut in omnibus protectionis tuae muniamur auxilio." The word *communicantes* in this place is almost certainly due to the influence of the Western reading in Rom. xii. 13, *μνείαις τῶν ἁγίων κοινωνοῦντες*, *memoriis sanctorum communicantes*, which whatever it meant originally would to the popular mind undoubtedly come to mean "communicating at the chapels of the saints".

not merely on a power of prayer prolonged beyond the grave—a pious aspiration which no churchman would be at pains to deny—but on their prevailing merits.

An interpretation of the words has been suggested which would justify the collocation in the eyes of many who find difficulty in accepting them in the current and most obvious sense. It may be argued that good works and the benefit arising from them have a certain efficacy, derivative if not primary. If “the supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working” (Jas. v. 16), may not his good deeds be regarded as in like manner operative?¹ And if the power to pray for others be prolonged beyond the grave,

¹ If works and prayer had been placed from the first and had remained throughout upon an equal footing in respect of their manner of operation and effect, it is possible that the abuses attending upon Invocation of the Departed might not have arisen. Traces of such an equalization may be seen in an authoritative document of the Eastern Church: “They,” i.e. the angels, “present our prayers and alms and other good works before the Divine Majesty” (*The Orthodox Confession of Peter Mogila*, edited by J. J. Overbeck, pp. 24 and 149, London, 1898; cf. Acts x. 4, 31). But the truth is that works and prayer have not been generally treated in the same way by theologians. Thus, while the treasury of merit is a recognized feature of the Roman Catholic system, no one has ever suggested that there should be a treasury of prayer to which a third party has the key, and from which he can draw for the use of others.

may we not believe that the power to act for others does likewise survive? But the passage in the Canon under consideration is surely not patient of this interpretation. The word is "merits", not "works", and the underlying thought is not merely of power to intercede, but of right to be heard, based upon the performance of superior duties.

Now the doctrine of human merit and of the peculiar merits of the Saints is the germ from which there grew the doctrines of works of supererogation, of the treasury of merits, of indulgences, &c. It was these concomitant doctrines which lay at the root of the need for the Reformation in the sixteenth century, or at least provided an immediate motive for it¹, though no doubt objection to the mediaeval Mass supplied a yet stronger motive; and unless we are prepared to undo history, we simply cannot reincorporate them, nor the original doctrine from which they spring, into the body of our divinity. Not but what the doctrine, even in its developed form, has

¹ Cf. the late H. Schultz, "Der sittliche Begriff des Verdienstes," four articles in *Theol. Studien und Kritiken* for 1894, the best examination of the subject of Merit with which I am acquainted. There is also a work by Dr. Wirth in progress of publication entitled *Der "Verdienst"-Begriff in der christlichen Kirche*, Leipzig, 1892, 1901, which is a valuable repository of quotations, but treats the subject with somewhat less breadth of view.

a very venerable history, far more venerable indeed than many reformers and heirs of the Reformation have been willing to allow. They have generally and quite truly referred the growth of superstition¹ to the period following on the peace of the Church, when large numbers of imperfectly instructed converts were admitted to membership. But investigation shows that superstition and error did not begin, though they largely developed, in the age of Constantine. We may cordially endorse the dictum of one who was no friend to Catholic Christianity, that the primitive Christians were the least superstitious of mankind², but the particular doctrine that pre-eminent merit gives the dead power to

¹ To avoid possible misconception arising out of the use of an admittedly indefinite term I may state that by "superstition" is here intended the retention of habits and notions which, without appearing at first sight directly opposed to Christianity, belong in essence to pre-Christian or non-Christian religion. Whether *superstitio* be etymologically traceable to *superstes* or not is a question for philologists to decide. The derivation suggested by Jacob Grimm (*Deutsche Mythologie*, E. Tr., p. 1106) is at least admirably illustrative of the meaning of the word that describes the general mental and moral complexion of Harnack's *Christliche Religion zweiter Ordnung* (cf. *D. G.*, Pt. II, Bk. i, ch. 10).

² "Si l'on excepte quelques sectes orientaux, les chrétiens primitifs sont les moins superstitieux des hommes," Renan, *Marc-Aurèle* (1882), p. 629.

intercede with God in behalf of the living was so familiar a feature of Jewish and Gentile thought at the time when the Gospel was first preached, that only a small spark was needed to kindle a great blaze of 'superstition.' The spark was supplied by the veneration called forth by martyrdom for the faith, and we shall find signs of its presence in the very earliest accounts of post-apostolic martyrdoms which have come down to us¹.

The notion that there is merit attaching to good works, and that therefore they deserve reward, is a very natural one which has indisputably its value within the sphere of human relations. We all admit in theory and in practice that a man's good deeds deserve reward at the hands of his fellow men; we allow that there is merit in the proper performance of duties in Church and State, and in successful accomplishment in the arts and sciences. It is only in the theological sphere, i.e. in our relation to God, that we deny the meritoriousness of human work and conduct². To this denial we are brought by

¹ Vide *infra*, p. 54.

² It is certainly true that the tendency of the present age is not towards Antinomianism, and that we are in no danger of forgetting the universal obligation of duty towards our neighbour in the confidence of our state of redemption. But it is never out of place to remind ourselves of the fundamental change which our Lord

the monitions of the Christian conscience and the express words of the New Testament. In the first place, the best of human deeds fade and tarnish when they are measured by the stainless purity of the Divine nature; there is not one of them that is not touched with imperfection, not one that does not need the prayer for forgiveness. And as a fact it will be found that holy men and women who in theory have laid claim to reward for service rendered, put away all thought of merit in connexion with their works when they bring them into the presence of God.

effected in the view of the relations between God and man, Himself taking the place of the Law which in orthodox Judaism supplied "the almost living link between the human and the Divine" (cf. E. R. Bernard, *The Path to Freedom*, pp. 23, 24, London, 1894). Our Lord made it clear that man could not be saved by law nor by works which are the human response to law, and S. Paul, catching up his Master's thought, insists that the way of Grace is God's new way with man, and that the faith in Christ which is man's response to Grace is the only means of reaching Justification. On the other hand, the semi-Pelagianism which puts works beside Faith as the means of Justification is never far from the surface at any stage in the history of the Church. Its appeal to the natural human instinct is extraordinarily strong, and it can indeed only be met by asserting the doctrine of S. Paul and of our Church that Faith is a vivifying principle which cannot possibly remain inactive, but must from its nature bear the fruit of a holy life well pleasing to God.

When Pius VII, the Pope of the Concordat, a modern martyr for his faith if there was one, lay on his death-bed, some one addressed him as "most holy Father". "Most holy Father," he said, "I am but a poor sinner!" And the priest who holds up to the dying eye the crucifix, symbol of salvation, himself preaches, and that more eloquently than by word of mouth, the comfortable doctrine that in the supreme hour a man must rely not on any merit of his own, but on the sole merits of Christ crucified for him¹.

At the same time there is no manner of doubt that while all parts of the Church regard Christ as the final source of salvation, and the power to do good works as the free gift of God, yet the unreformed Churches of the West do ascribe to the works which a man is enabled to perform a degree of effectiveness which the English Church does not. Such theological differences of detail, where the ultimate basis of belief is identical, may seem unnecessary and over-subtle. But the effect in practice of the one view is to lead a man to disclaim all property in himself and to live entirely in Christ, whereas the other

¹ Cf. Martensen, *Christl. Dogmatik*, § 231; and for a consideration of the question how far we may apply the thought of merit even to the life and death of Christ, see Schultz, *op. cit.*, on p. 23, note.

view inclines to the assumption that grace is given to a man as so much stock which he may call his own, and from which he may draw at will¹.

The case of the Eastern Church in this matter appears at first sight somewhat different. Her theologians speak with no very certain voice on the subject of merit, but they definitely disclaim the Western development of the doctrine the logical issue of which is the Roman theory of Purgatory. "We do not acknowledge Purgatory," wrote Alexis Khomiakoff to W. Palmer, "that is, the purification of souls by sufferings, from which they may be redeemed by their own works or those of others; for the Church knows nothing of salvation by outward means, nor any sufferings, whatever they may be, except those of Christ; nor of bargaining with God, as in the case of a man buying himself off by good works²." Similarly, Archbishop Philaret declares that "No one has the power to deliver sinners from torments by the application of the works of *supererogation* of Jesus Christ or of the saints, because the merits of Jesus Christ are not under the control of man; and works of *supererogation* in the

¹ Cf. F. D. Maurice, *Kingdom of Christ*, ch. ii, § 2.

² *Russia and the English Church* (1895), p. 217.

Saints are impossible, as they themselves are only saved by grace" ¹; but the Fathers, viz. S. Basil and S. Cyril of Jerusalem, to whom reference is made in the *Longer Catechism* of the Russian Church ² for sanction of the practice of Invocation, were, it is certain, under no doubt that the office of ambassador and protector bestowed upon victorious Saints of the New Covenant was the guerdon of their martyrdom.

It is difficult to say how far the current popular custom of the Orthodox Eastern Church with regard to invocation of the departed can be described as sanctioned or commanded by authority. As is well known, the habitual practice of the Russian Church is for the living to invoke in prayer the faithful

¹ *Comparative Statement of Russo-Greek and Roman Catholic Doctrines*, quoted by Dr. Headlam in *The Teaching of the Russian Church* (1897), pp. 19 and 20.

² The passage from S. Basil quoted in the *Catechism* is taken from the *Sermo in XL Martyres*, which is a long paean of praise of the martyrs, and ends upon a note of exultation as high and loud as any in literature of the kind. Ὡ χορὸς ἅγιος· ὦ σύνταγμα ἱερὸν· ὦ συνασπισμὸς ἀρραγής· ὦ κοινοὶ φύλακες τοῦ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων· ἀγαθοὶ κοινωνοὶ φροντίδων, δεήσεως συνεργοί, πρεσβεύται δυνατώτατοι, ἀστέρες τῆς οἰκουμένης, ἄνθη τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν κ.τ.λ. Migne, P.G. xxxi, col. 523. Cf. Cyril Hier. *Cat. Myst.* v. 9 ὅπως ὁ Θεὸς ταῖς εὐχαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ πρεσβείαις προσδέξεται ἡμῶν τὴν δέησιν. Migne, P. G. xxxiii, col. 1116.

departed without discrimination¹. But I can find no authorization for the practice in any doctrinal statement of the Orthodox Church. The *Longer Catechism* declares that the "Church calls upon Christ our true God, by the prayers of His most pure mother and all His saints", and adduces witness for "the mediatory prayer of the saints in Heaven"²; but who are the saints is nowhere to my knowledge exactly defined. The nearest approach to a definition is in the clause of the Catechism on the Church Invisible which is described as "containing all that have departed hence in true faith and holiness"³, and in Peter Mogila's account of Heaven as the place where dwell "the souls of men who depart hence in favour with God and have wiped out their sins by repentance"⁴. The body of the Saints is therefore, according to the Eastern Church, of vast and constantly increasing volume, but there are certain conditions under which a dead man is officially admitted by the Holy Synod into the order of the *Svjatýe*, viz. a reputation for good works, miracles wrought at his grave, and a literal

¹ Cf. Birkbeck, *Russia and the Eastern Church*, p. 2.

² Headlam, *The Teaching of the Russian Church*, p. 20.

³ Cf. Blackmore, *Doctrine of the Russian Church* (1848), pp. 78, 79.

⁴ Cf. P. Mogila, *op. cit.*, pp. 36, 37.

application of the test of the odour of sanctity¹. The process of recognition has been much restricted since the time of Peter the Great, although it was quite recently (August, 1903) put into practice in behalf of the monk Seraphim, who died, after a life of austerity and beneficence, in 1833².

But when we turn to the patristic sources of the doctrine of the Eastern Church and read there the roll of those whom the faithful are called upon to worship and honour as the friends of God³, and when we consider the unbroken continuity of thought and teaching that links the Orthodox Church of to-day with the Church of the early centuries, it can

¹ Cf. Kattenbusch in Hauck, *Realencyklopädie*³, vol. xiv, p. 460, s.v. Orientalische Kirche.

² Cf. *The Times* for Feb. 27 and Aug. 13, 1903.

³ e.g. τοὺς ἁγίους πιστοὶ (πίστει?) θεραπεύσωμεν . . . τὴν θεοτόκον, ὡς κυρίως καὶ ἀληθῶς θεοῦ Μητέρα τιμήσωμεν· τὸν προφήτην Ἰωάννην, ὡς πρόδρομον καὶ βαπτιστὴν, ἀπόστολον τε καὶ μάρτυρα . . . τοὺς ἀποστόλους, ὡς ἀδελφοὺς τοῦ κυρίου καὶ αὐτόπτας καὶ ὑπηρέτας τῶν αὐτοῦ παθημάτων . . . τοὺς τε κυρίου μάρτυρας ἐκ παντὸς τάγματος ἐκκληλεγμένους . . . ὦν ταξίαρχος ὁ . . . πρωτόμαρτυς Στέφανος· καὶ τοὺς ὁσίου πατέρας ἡμῶν, τοὺς θεοφόρους ἀσκητὰς τοὺς τὸ χρονιώτερον καὶ ἐπιπονώτερον μαρτύριον τῆς συνειδήσεως διαβλήσαντας . . . τοὺς πρὸ τῆς χάριτος προφήτας, πατριάρχας, δικαίους, τοὺς προκαταγγελλότας τὴν τοῦ κυρίου παρουσίαν (τιμήσωμεν). Johannes Damascenus, *De fide orthodoxa*, iv, c. 15; P. G. xciv, p. 1163. This work of S. John of Damascus is one of the chief authorities for the developed doctrine of the Orthodox Church (cf. Headlam, *op. cit.*, p. 37).

hardly be doubted that the two main constituent elements of the great body of the Saints are the noble army of martyrs, who, according to the teaching of the Fathers from the third century onwards, won merit by their blood, and the patient company of ascetics, whose lives were a living death to earth.

Now the general relation of man to God which is revealed in the New Testament is indeed not compatible with any theory of merit. For merit, whether "of condignity" or "of congruity", is based ultimately upon a conception of legal right, and the thought of legal right is not a thought that can be moving in our minds when we raise them towards Almighty God. Our relation to Him-ward, as expressed in terms of human life through image and metaphor by our Saviour, is either that of children towards a father of whose goodness and justice there can be no question; and so the idea of legal claim does not arise: or else that of bond-servants towards an owner, a relation equally barren of claim, for, as our Lord's auditors were well aware, the *δοῦλος* had no sort of legal status in ancient society, but was absolutely dependent on his master's will. In the one connexion where our Lord employs an image which admits the thought of merit, where He describes

mankind as ἐργάται, i. e. labourers entitled to reward by conditions of a bargain, He deliberately sets the οἰκοδεσπότης above the sphere of legal considerations, describing Him as one who refuses to be bound by the terms of ordinary contract, and who holds Himself free to do what He wills with His own (Matt. xx. 1 ff.).

It is true that our Lord on several occasions gave His sanction to the popular religious belief of His time that moral conduct will have its reward; but the reward is in all cases promised not so much to the discharge of individual acts of duty as to the spirit in which those acts are performed. Where the spirit is a worldly one, the reward is regarded as taking place here and now (Matt. v. 46; vi. 2, 5, 16; Luke xiv. 12 ff.). Good fruits spring only from a good tree; works are the fruit of faith (Matt. xii. 33; xiii. 23). Our Lord taught, and the lesson evidently sank deep into the hearts of His disciples, that merit belonging to actions performed and their consequent reward depend not on the actions themselves but on the personal character of the agent¹. We may indeed say that what appears at first sight to be reward is in

¹ Cf. Matt. xvi. 27 κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν αὐτοῦ (not κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ as in the O. T. sources of the phrase, viz. Ps. lxii. 12; Prov. xxiv. 12); 1 Pet. i. 17 κατὰ τὸ ἐκάστου ἔργον, with Hort's note; 1 Cor. iii. 13-15; Gal. vi. 4.

reality recognition of a character agreeable to God. It is the whole life, the sum of all a man's personal action in thought, word and deed, the principle of love which finds expression in acts of love, upon which recompense is to be bestowed. And those who regard the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles as the truest reflection of the mind of Christ will note that the thought of reward is conspicuously absent from these writings, with the sole exception of 2 John 8. Upon any showing, merit cannot begin until the claims of moral duty are exhausted, and this, according to Christ's law of love, can never be. Finally, in one highly significant passage our Lord distinctly and emphatically forbade the thought of merit in connexion with the service of God¹,

¹ Luke xvii. 1-10. Verse 10, "Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants," &c. has been quoted times without number as illustrating our Lord's attitude towards "merit"; but the illustration loses force by being considered apart from the context, and a flood of light is thrown upon the problem when the passage is read as a connected whole. The apostles ask for an increase of wonder-working faith (ver. 5) to meet the grave new responsibility (vers. 1-4) of which they are suddenly made conscious. The Lord replies by assuring them that they already possess a sufficient supply to meet the demand if only they will use it (ver. 6), and then in a parable He points the duty of obedient

and the general tenor of His teaching is to concentrate attention on the love and justice of the Divine Master, and to divert it from the quality of the service undertaken in His cause.

When we examine carefully the teaching of S. Paul we find that the conception of legal right is totally excluded from his theological system, and has existence for him only in the relations between man and man (Rom. xiii. 7 ff.). Indeed, the theory of merit was a thing irreconcilable with his antithesis of works and faith, and with his conviction of the radical imperfection of human obedience to the Law and the irremissible condemnation which this imperfection entails¹, a conviction which finds frequent and poignant expression in his epistles, e. g. Rom. iii. 20; Gal. ii. 16; iii. 11. These New Testament utterances were certainly necessary in order to correct the current Jewish conception that merit could be acquired by good works. There is evidence in the Old Testament that the children of Israel regarded the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of law and ordinance as the standard of Jehovah's judgement of man². And there

employment of their talents without hope of reward (vers. 7-10).

¹ Cf. H. Sidgwick, *History of Ethics*, ed. 2, p. 117.

² Cf. H. Schultz, *Alttest. Theologie* (1889), p. 170.

are traces of a desire to base a claim on the divine mercy by the performance of good deeds (Neh. v. 19; xiii. 14, 22. 31; Ps. xvi. 4). But the Jew of the post-exilic period carried the conception a step further than was warranted by the books of the Hebrew Canon, and came to believe that man was constantly laying up for himself a store of merits in heaven (Tobit iv. 9; Baruch xiv. 12)¹. Alms-giving and the relief of the poor, which occupy a very subordinate place in the Law (Deut. xv. 7, 8; Lev. xxv. 35), now become a chief means towards the formation of such a treasury. "Alms doth deliver from death, and it shall purge away all sin" (Tobit xii. 9); and it is ranked with righteousness as a source of life (Tobit iv. 11²; xiv. 10, 11; Eccclus. xvii. 22, 23; xxix. 12, 13; xl. 24, &c.). Personal righteousness, despite the warning of the prophet (Ezek. xiv. 15 ff.), came to be considered as capable of extended application, and indeed as possessing efficacy beyond the grave. A man's own righteous acts could be

¹ Cf. 2 Esdras vii. [77], a book which may be probably assigned to the reign of Domitian (81-96 A.D.), but which is of distinctly Jewish and non-Christian origin.

² We, whose use of the Old Testament and Apocrypha is conditioned by the application of the spirit of the New Testament, can freely adopt into our liturgy the language of Tobit iv. 7 ff.

supplemented by the merits of the dead patriarchs (Baruch ii. 2; xiv. 7; lxxxiv. 10).

The idea of human merit carrying a kind of right and privilege into the next world was without doubt firmly established in the Jewish mind at the beginning of our era. That this privilege and this right took the form of intercession by the departed in behalf of the living is plain from a passage in 2 Maccabees¹—a book which was certainly compiled before the destruction of Jerusalem—where the vision of the man of venerable age and exceeding glory is explained to be “the lover of the brethren, he who prayeth much for the people and the holy city, Jeremiah the prophet of God” (2 Macc. xv. 14). Further evidence for the same belief is provided by Philo *De exsecrationibus*, 9 (where one medium of intercession is “the holiness of the leaders of the people, because with souls freed from bodies, doing simple and unadorned service to the Lord, they are accustomed to make petitions not void of effect in behalf of their sons and daughters, the Father grant-

¹ The passages from the Ethiopic Book of Enoch, quoted by Dr. Charles as evidence for a belief in the intercession of the departed, viz. xxii. 12; xcvii. 3, are really cries for vengeance like Rev. vi. 10. It may be observed that the Slavonic Enoch denies the privilege in question. See *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, ed. Charles, Oxford, 1896, ch. liii, 1 note.

ing them the boon of audience in prayer"), and by Josephus, *Antiqq.* i. 13, where Abraham says to Isaac, "He (Jehovah) will place thee near to Himself, and thou wilt be there to be a succourer and supporter of my old age¹."

Finally, we have the popular comment on the cry from the Cross, "This man calleth for Elijah" (Matt. xxvii. 47), and the cry for help to Father Abraham in our Lord's own allegory of Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 14-31), a passage which, it must be remembered, is not a parable, much less a description of existing conditions, but may be considered as an *argumentum ad hominem*, a lesson on the danger of divided service and the misuse of "the unrighteous mammon", expressed in terms of the Pharisees' own belief². These cases make it clear beyond the range of doubt that to the patriarchs and leaders of the people there was attributed by the people the right to plead with God in virtue of the merits which their good works, their righteousness, their almsgiving and the like, had won for them³.

It would be rash to assert that the first

¹ Cf. also *Oracula Sibyll.* ii. 331-334, ed. Friedlieb (1852).

² Cf. B. Weiss *ad loc.* in Meyer's *Kg. Kommentar*, 8th ed., 1890.

³ On the whole subject cf. Weber, *Jüdische Theologie* (Leipzig, 1897), p. 292 ff.

preachers of the Gospel would have found outside the limits of the Jewish Church anything corresponding to this belief in merit, useful and available after death¹. The popular religions of Greece and Rome afford, so far as I am aware, no parallel to it. But the exalted notion of the moral value of human nature presented by philosophers of the day—the Epicureans as well as the Stoics—and its embodiment in the imposing figure of the wise man, inferior to Zeus himself only in point of length of life, must at least have facilitated the blending of the popular Jewish belief in human merit with the system of either of the prevailing schools of thought with which it came into contact. The elements of that belief, if they were not actually provided by Stoicism as has recently been suggested², were at least floating in solution there. Humanity, if capable of such

¹ The "acquirement of merit" is perhaps the strongest moral incentive of Buddhism (cf. Bishop Copleston, *Buddhism Primitive and Present*, p. 203 ff.), and "to have done good deeds in a former life" is one of the greatest blessings according to the traditional saying of Gautama (cf. T. W. Rhys Davids in *Encycl. Brit.*, s.v. Buddhism). It is difficult to resist the conclusion that we have here a thinly veiled form of vicarious merit, and its appearance on so different a soil and under such different conditions is at least evidence of the width of its range and the power of its appeal to natural human instinct.

² Cf. Wirth, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 55 ff.

perfection as Cicero and Seneca hinted, must have intrinsic value; men must deserve reward from heaven for what they were or did of good. It is not therefore matter for surprise to find that Tertullian, the former disciple of the Porch, the man whose whole ethical teaching is deeply tinged with Stoicism¹, should be the first Christian writer to formulate a distinct doctrine of merit: "Nemo indulgentia (Dei) utendo promeretur sed uoluntati obsequendo" (*De Exhort. Cast.*, c. 1). Tertullian caught and fixed the floating ideas of his time with regard to merit and reward, determining their lines of subsequent development, and introducing into them a legal phraseology and cast of thought from which the Western Church still suffers². The most notable addition which the current Jewish theory received at his hands was the notion that it is possible for a man to perform acts which are not strictly required of him, but are yet well-pleasing to God, and so to win merit and deserve reward. There is no merit, he says, in taking advantage of the indulgence of God, and not fulfilling the tale of possible sin. Merit begins when a man forgoes what is permitted, or performs what lies outside divinely-appointed duty

¹ Cf. Harnack, *D. G.*, Pt. II, Bk. ii, ch. 2.

² Cf. Hort, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1895), p. 105.

in answer to God's will and purpose with respect to us, viz. our sanctification, through mortification of our flesh. To merit thus acquired there belongs a legal claim to reward. No reward is so high that it cannot be won by merit¹.

This view, which, as we have seen, is foreign to the genius of New Testament Christianity, but which was taken up by S. Cyprian, an African and a Jurist like his master, and gathered strength with later Fathers, may probably be traced to Tertullian's stoical and forensic training. That training took place under pagan influences; and although, as already stated, there is no evidence of a Gentile theory of merit corresponding to

¹ Cf. "Ergo si ideo declaravit (sc. Deus), ut id secteris quod magis uult, sine dubio nisi ita facis, contra uoluntatem eius sapis, sapiendo contra potiore[m] eius uoluntatem, magisque offendis quam promereris, quod uult quidem faciendo et quod mauult respuendo ex parte delinquis; ex parte, si non delinquis, non tamen promereris," *De Exhort. Cast.*, c. 3. "Deus enim reprobationem bonorum (sc. operum) ratam non habens utpote suorum, quorum cum auctor et defensor sit necesse est proinde et acceptator. Si acceptator etiam remunerator. . . Bonum factum Deum habet debitorem sicuti et malum: quia iudex remunerator est causae omnis," *De Paen.* 2. Cf. *Apol.* 21, 24 (promereri Deum).

It will be noted that all the works from which these quotations are taken were written before Tertullian severed himself from the Church.

the Jewish theory under consideration, yet there is no manner of doubt that Greek thought at its highest point of cultivation, much more in the period of its decadence, not only as expressed in the writings of philosophers, but as moving in the minds of the masses, attributed to good men after death the power of mediation between heaven and earth. They passed into the category of daemons¹, and daemons were intermediary between gods and men, interpreting and conveying to the gods above the prayers and sacrifices of mankind².

Below the daemons in rank, but endowed with equal protective power³, stood the heroes. The class of these beings was practically unlimited. If admission to the company of the daemons depended on a man's good deeds⁴, it lay within the competence of any family to make heroes of its members after death, and to entrust to them the guardianship of the living. Altars and temples were erected to them, memorial feasts were held at their

¹ Plato, *Crat.* 398 C and D, quoting Hesiod, *Op.* 123 ff. Cf. Plutarch, *De genio Socr.* 24.

² Plato, *Sympos.* 202 E; Plutarch, *De defectu orac.* 13; *Isis et Osiris*, 26, &c. Cf. Hild, *Étude sur les Démones* (1881).

³ The word "hero" means "protector", according to the most probable etymology (Roscher, *Ausführl. Lexicon der griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, s.v. Heros).

⁴ Cf. Plutarch, *Romulus*, 28.

graves which they were supposed to haunt, and where their influence was particularly active¹. If we seek for a cause of this exaltation of the dead in heathen society, we may perhaps find it in the endeavour which philosophers made to reduce the universe to a single principle. They looked first of all to matter itself as the source of the one formative principle, and then, yielding to the conviction that there is something higher than matter, they removed the spiritual out of the sphere of the material, and enthroned it in a distant realm of its own. This process culminated in the transcendentalism of Plato, which laid the lines on which all heathen theological speculation ran at the commencement of our era. This belief in the transcendent unity of God filtered down from the schools of philosophy into the masses, whose native instincts were polytheistic, but who had behind them a memory of monotheism; with the result that a Christian writer at the close of the second century was able to refer to the belief as innate and as furnishing evidence for the naturally Christian character of the human soul².

¹ See quotations in Lucius, *Anfänge des Heiligenkults* (Tübingen, 1904), p. 19.

² "O testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae!" Tert., *Apol.* 17.

Between the one supreme Deity and the world of matter there was an immense abyss, for in proportion as the spiritual rose out of the natural by the process which we have indicated, it drew up into itself any elements of good which might have been originally regarded as inherent in the natural world, and left that world unclean, ungodly, unworthy of direct contact with Him who, having formed it, must still remain its ultimate Guide and Governor even from His remote and solitary throne. For the purpose of bridging this gulf intermediary agents were imagined, of which for obvious reasons the most intelligible to the popular mind were the daemons and heroes¹. To one or other or both of these classes (the line of demarcation between cannot have been very clear) was entrusted the immediate government of the sensible world, the control of every department of human life, the protection of hearth and city, and that general mediation between earth and heaven without which mankind is unable to subsist. As we have already seen, there was no recognized system of canonization; the family could create its own appropriate

¹ The old gods were practically shut up in heaven away from intervention with human concerns, and were accordingly of no avail. Cf. Apuleius, *De deo Socr.* 4, 5, and Lucius, *op. cit.*, p. 6 ff.

hero, and the mere fact of death, the passage from earth into the unseen, constituted a claim to reverence and worship. Countless inscriptions belonging to the period with which we are concerned bear witness to the belief in the general power of the departed to assist the living. Parents invoke the souls of their children, children the souls of their parents, wives and husbands, brothers and sisters, turn each to other, the living to the dead, for help and protection.

This belief was grounded partly in the universal and primitive habit of mankind to regard the dead as beings of a higher nature, potent to help or harm¹, and partly in the specifically Greek doctrine of the intimate relationship between the race of gods and that of men², and the consequent ease with which mortals could become immortal, a doctrine which finds its final expression in the Orphic cry—

“Happy and blessed one, thou shalt be god instead of mortal³.”

Bearing in mind what has already been said about contemporary philosophy and the Jewish conception of the merits of the dead patriarchs, we see that from whichever side,

¹ Cf. Tylor, *Prim. Cult.*³ ii. p. 111 ff.

² Cf. e. g. Pindar, *Nem.* vii. 1 ff.

³ Cf. J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena*, p. 589 ff.

Judaic or Gentile, a convert approached the new religion, he would bring to it a mind at least predisposed to a belief in the power of intercession in his behalf with a supreme Deity on the part of superior spiritual beings; while if he knew anything of the prevailing schools of philosophic thought he would come forward with at least a prejudice in favour of vicarious and supplementary merit exercised by the perfect wise man in behalf of weaker brethren (*vide supra*, pp. 36 and 38). Indeed unless his mind responded readily to the Gospel revelation of a God at once transcendent and immanent in the world, and to the teaching of S. John and the Fathers concerning the Logos and the Incarnation; unless he saw, with the eyes of S. Paul, the insufficiency of all human works and the all-sufficiency of the one atoning sacrifice, he would be greatly inclined to look to those who represented best his ideal of the Christian life, to fill up what was lacking in himself and to stand between his weakness and the awful majesty of God. For just as the doctrine of the immanence of God, when held alone, is most apt to develop into Pantheism, so the doctrine of the transcendent God, when held apart from the thought of His immanence, suggests inevitably the need of mediatorial agents. The Jew, as we have

seen, could look for help to the fathers of Israel; but the heathen hierarchy of daemons and heroes, which supplied the need of the Gentile world in this respect, was a thing abhorrent to the Christian convert—they were real enough to him, but they were devils and to be renounced. Some one must take their place in the new system¹. It was natural

¹ I do not of course mean to suggest that the veneration of saints is merely a survival of heathenism, or that Christian saints were deliberately substituted for pagan demi-gods and daemons; my contention is that the tendency of all popular religion is towards the creation of a mediatorial agency between God and man, and that this office which was discharged by heroes and daemons outside the Church fell to the lot of glorified human beings within it.

A word of timely protest against the school of critics who find pagan traces in every Christian saint and Christian festival is raised by Père H. Delehaye in his *Les Légendes hagiographiques* (Brussels, 1905), p. 181 ff. But the learned Bollandist admits that the cultus of heroes prepared the way for the cultus of saints (*op. cit.*, p. 189), as indeed no one who has read Theodoret's *Graecarum affectionum curatio* could deny. The whole of the eighth discourse is occupied with a comparison between heathen daemons and Christian martyrs to whom equal powers are ascribed, but not the title of gods. Cf. especially *G.A.C.*, viii (Migne, *P.G.*, lxxxiii, col. 1032), where Theodoret describes how the tombs of the martyrs are frequented by those in search of health, posterity, protection on a journey, &c., and how thanks are there offered by those who have received benefits, "not approaching them (the martyrs) as gods, but beseeching them as divine men, and imploring them to act as intercessors."

that many men, that most men, should make appeal to those who by general consent were closest followers of Christ and displayed in their lives and by their deaths the operation of the Spirit of the Lord. But before recourse was thus had to human beings, the mediatorial service of the angels was employed, being extended beyond the warrant of Holy Scripture to include the interpretation as well as the transmission of men's prayers¹.

Belief in a class of spiritual beings attendant upon God and serving as a medium of communication between Him and His creation is a constant feature of the Bible, and was an element in the religion of Israel before the Exile. The developed doctrine, however, of which we find distinct traces in the New Testament, dates probably from the time of the Captivity when the Jews took over, together with many results of eastern speculation, a mass of superstition concerning the world of spirits, which passed into the body of Rabbinic theology. The Book of Tobit, for example, which so largely helped

¹ Cf. Graetz, *History of the Jews* (1891), vol. i, p. 416. For the question how far a certain cultus of the dead patriarchs accompanied the growth of angelology during and after the Captivity see Cheyne on Isa. lxiii. 7.

the development of a system of angelology, bears evident traces of Persian influence¹.

To the Christian Church, which entered as heir into this rich store of Jewish tradition on the subject, and which was also recruited from the ranks of Greek polytheists holding firmly the notion of intermediary beings between God and the world, the activity of angels could not fail to be a subject of pressing interest. From the very first, Christian fancy was busily employed upon the solution of questions which the books of Scripture had left unanswered as to the nature and properties of these servants of God. Catholic writers, indeed, are not slow to rebuke the Gnostics for the excessive veneration paid by them to the angels, but the results of Catholic speculation itself led a long way in the like direction. It did not, however, lead to the length of invocation or worship. Although Justin Martyr speaks of "the Son and the other angels like unto him"²; although Origen gives the angels a place of honour in heaven second only to the Son; although the details of the govern-

¹ For evidence of the vogue enjoyed by the Book of Tobit in the early Church cf. Clem. Alex. *Strom.* ii. 23, § 139; Origen, *Ep. ad Afric.* 13; Athan. *Apol. c. Arian.* 11; Cyprian, *De Orat. Dom.* 32; August. *De doctrin. Christ.* ii. 8.

² *Apol.* i. 6.

ment of the physical universe were by the Fathers generally placed under the immediate control and guidance of angels, and S. Ambrose for one encouraged trust in guardian angels (*De viduis*, 9); still the consensus of instructed and thoughtful opinion was steadily set against angel-worship. The great Churchmen of the first five centuries seem to have viewed the movement with suspicion¹. But they were powerless to put it down or prevent it. Thus we know that at a very early date certain regions of the East, notably Phrygia, were covered with oratories in honour of S. Michael², and a Church Council of the fourth century thought it necessary to forbid the cultus of angels³ wherein the unreflecting multitude evidently found satisfaction for their need of mediators. They embraced and practised it with eagerness and speedily overstepped in this respect the bounds of Catholic orthodoxy. A modern Roman Catholic scholar, who has made a special study of Christian angelology, closes his history of the cultus up to the end of the fifth century with a passage which puts the matter better than

¹ Cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* ii. 32, 35; Athanasius, *Orat. c. Arian.* iii. 12; Epiphanius, *Haer.* lxxix. 5; Theodoret, *G. A. C.* iii, col. 890; August. *De civ. Dei*, x. 19; *De vera relig.* 55.

² Cf. Sozom. *H. E.* ii. 3; Theodoret, *Interpr. ad Coloss.* ii. 18.

³ Conc. Laodic., canon 35.

any words of mine¹: "The rapid growth of the cultus of angels in orthodox communities was not only an effect of the influence of Gnosticism, it was also an answer to a requirement of the religious conscience of the masses. At a time when the cultus of the saints was only just beginning, traditional belief provided angels to play the part of those intercessors which popular devotion demands. This explains the prevalence in the Church as early as the third century of the devotion to angels. Throughout the period which we have been studying (i.e. the first five centuries A.D.) it was nothing more than a vulgar belief which divines were more disposed to censure than to support. But in

¹ "Ce n'est pas seulement à l'influence . . . de la Gnose, mais à un besoin de la conscience religieuse dans les masses populaires, que le culte des anges a dû les progrès qu'il fit bientôt dans les communautés orthodoxes. La dévotion populaire réclame des intercesseurs, et à une époque où le culte des saints ne faisait que de naître, la croyance traditionnelle lui fournissait les anges pour tenir ce rôle. C'est ce qui explique comment, dès le III^e siècle, la dévotion aux anges était si répandue dans l'Église. Pendant toute la période que nous venons d'étudier, ce ne fut qu'un culte populaire que les théologiens étaient plus disposés à blâmer qu'à encourager. Mais la piété des simples, en ce cas comme en beaucoup d'autres, a fini par vaincre les résistances des théologiens." J. Turmel, *Histoire de l'Angélologie* in the *Revue d'Histoire et de Littérature religieuses* for 1898, p. 551.

this case, as in many others, popular piety finally overcame the resistance offered by the science of theology."

But popular devotion would not rest content with the mediatorial agency of angels; they were at best too vague in form and too spiritual in character, in a word too unhuman, for their cult to correspond to the demand for effective mediation; for a mediator in behalf of men must share the nature of those for whom he acts. No doubt the play of imagination would have in process of time invested them with the necessary qualities, and others of the heavenly host beside S. Michael would have acquired distinct personality and individuality; but there were already other mediators at hand more easy of access and more responsive to human needs, to wit, the Saints and martyrs.

II

THE THEORY OF MERIT: ITS APPLICATION

AT first all Christians, without discrimination, were saints. The theory that "the Saints" formed a class apart, a separate "order" in the Church, is based upon insufficient evidence¹. The term was taken over from the Old Testament (cf. Dan. vii. 18, 22, 27) and applied by New Testament writers to all members of the Christian body (cf. Acts ix. 13, 32, 41; Rom. i. 7; xvi. 2, 15; 1 Cor. vi. 1; xiv. 34; 2 Cor. i. 1, &c.), and in the first instance to members of the mother church at Jerusalem (cf. Rom. xv. 25, 31; 1 Cor. xvi. 1; 2 Cor. viii. 4; ix. 1, 12). In the course of the second century a restricted meaning of the word came into use. It was applied to a special class, viz. those Christians in whom the power of the Spirit displayed itself in an unusual degree. It seems probable that the claims of this class were first advanced by the Montanist party, which aimed at reform of the Church and a purer life in its members. They were pure and perfect—most perfect of

¹ Against Manchot, *Die Heiligen* (1877), cf. Bonwetsch in Hauck's *Realencyklopädie*³, s.v. Heilige.

the perfect were the martyrs for the faith. But the Catholic Church, which the Montanists denounced as backsliding, already regarded the blood of the martyrs as cleansing from sin, and if the Passion of S. Perpetua (202 A.D.), which although Catholic in substance has undergone a Montanist redaction, contains the first definite allusion to baptism by blood¹, and if it is Tertullian the Montanist who first claims that death for the Lord is fraught with sacramental efficacy², there is surely a yet earlier reference implicit in the Catholic Passion of S. Polycarp.

In this document, which is admittedly contemporaneous with the event it describes, i. e. 155 or 156 A. D., we are told that the aged Polycarp, "when the pile was made ready, divested himself of all his upper garments, loosed his girdle, and endeavoured also to take off his shoes,"³ &c.

This unusual action⁴ may very well signify

¹ "A sanguine ad sanguinem, ab obstetrice ad retiarium, lotura post partum secundo baptismo," *Passio S. Perpetuae*, 118.

² *De baptismo*, 16; *Scorp.* 12.

³ *Passio S. Polycarp.* 13.

⁴ The action seems to have caught the attention of Lucian (120-200 A. D.), who in his *De morte Peregrini* (which there is good reason to believe was written with knowledge of the *Passio S. Polycarpi*) describes Peregrinus as making the same preparation for the pyre, and em-

preparation for baptism, baptism by blood and fire. Was Polycarp the first to make such a literal interpretation of the metaphor of Mark x. 28? This is not likely. There is beauty in the thought of the old man renewing at the close of his six-and-fourscore years the vows he made at the font, and proclaiming to the world that now he was indeed being baptized with the baptism of his Lord; but the words spoken to the sons of Zebedee must have lain very near the surface of men's minds in every time of persecution, and their application was inevitable the first time that a catechumen suffered death. It is indeed a token of the wisdom and generous mind of the Church that she was thus ready from the beginning to admit the working of the Holy Spirit apart from ritual action and the outward sign prescribed by Christ; but the admission helped to foster an undue veneration for martyrdom, which, if it facilitated the spread of the Gospel among the masses as nothing else could have done, did so at the cost of an estimate of the value of human fortitude which we are bound to call exaggerated. For the office of Christianity is quite as much to teach men to live as to enable them to die, andphasizes its unwonted character by a special note to the reader (*op. cit.* 36).

the mood in which many martyrs went to their death is hardly according to the meekness of the Lord ¹.

This charge assuredly cannot be laid to the account of S. Polycarp, whose bearing throughout his passion compels the deepest wonder and affection; and as we read the story we can, even at a distance of 1750 years, enter into the feelings of the Smyranean brethren, and understand how it was that the cult of martyrs began and grew. For this document, which supplies the norm for all subsequent compositions of the kind, contains in germ all the elements which in later times gave rise to beliefs and practices of really superstitious nature. The eagerness of the crowd to touch "the holy flesh", the odour of sanctity, the Saint's body unharmed by flame ²—all these are features which are big with potency of dangerous development, but which are very natural at the time and in the circumstances. It is difficult for us to gauge the moral and physical effect wrought upon the bystanders by the sight of a martyr's death. We have indeed no standard for forming judgement. Later history, contemporary

¹ Cf. F. C. Conybeare, *Monuments of Early Christianity* (1896), p. 1 ff.

² *Passio S. Polycarpi*, 13, 15, 16.

history, have had their examples of Christian heroism and resistance unto blood. But there is to-day nothing at all comparable with the outward conditions of early martyrdoms¹—the long tension of the imprisonment, the excitement of the examination before the magistrate, with its unvarying form of question and its seldom varying answer, the horror of the final scene. When we think upon it all, and consider the frequency of the occurrence and the magnitude of the stake at issue, which was nothing less than the existence of the corporate Church, then we can understand how it was that men looked on Polycarp and those who died like him as forming a class apart from and above the rest, in the imitation of whom lay the perfect following of Christ, and that they were ready to salute them as more than human and possessed of more than human powers. No wonder that the people called on them to save, no wonder that doctors and divines, bishops and leaders of the Church were swept from their moorings by the wave of feeling which the martyrs caused, and that the whole Church with hardly a dissentient voice should have extolled them as types and patterns of the Christian life (for had they not suffered like

¹ Modern martyrdoms have not, so far as I am aware, ever given rise to a cult of the martyr.

Christ?), as the specially beloved of God (how would He refuse aught when they had given all to Him?), that they should be enthroned on high at His right hand, without any previous sojourn in the shades, reigning in glory with the apostles and angels, cleansed by the blood they had shed from every stain of sin.

The veneration with which the martyrs were universally regarded was not laid up for them only after death. From the moment that a Christian had expressed his readiness to die for his faith by confession of it before the court, he became the object of peculiar love and honour. The will was taken for the deed; to have offered oneself in the sight of God to death and torture was considered as equivalent to actual death and torture at the hands of man¹. To escape death did not disqualify from the title of martyr, and the distinction was quite vague between witnesses who remained in life and witnesses who sealed their testimony by their blood. It was only natural that confessors should be endowed with special privileges, the chief of which was the right to pardon the lapsed and readmit them to communion², and that the martyrs should

¹ Cf. Cypr. *Epp.* xii. 1; xv. 1; lxxvi. 6; *De Lapsis*, 3.

² S. Cyprian, however, was not willing that confessors should pardon the lapsed apart from reference to the bishop, except in cases of extreme danger. Cf. E. W. Benson, *Cyprian* (1897), p. 97. It was probably due to S. Cyprian's

be entrusted with the care of the Church for which they had suffered, and should be invested with peculiar power to intercede for it with God.

From the earliest days belief in the intercessory activity on the part of the martyrs in bliss was generally held by the mass of the people¹, but that the veneration for them had not, at least by the end of the second century, crystallized into doctrine and a recognized cultus, is suggested by the absence of any reference to it in the writings of the opponents of the Church. Celsus indeed ridiculed the Christians for their worship of the dead, but it was the worship of one Jesus of Nazareth that he had in view. This restriction is in singular contrast with the eagerness with which heathen writers from the middle of the fourth century onwards cast Saint-worship in the teeth of the Christians². By that time the impulse

wisdom and foresight that the general enthusiasm in respect to confessors did not involve in ruin the whole fabric of church government. Yet he yielded to none in his admiration for confessors. Vide supra p. 58, note 1, and cf. *Ep.* xv. 1 "beatissimi martyres"; x. 1 "beatissimi fratres". On the whole subject consult Abp. Benson, *op. cit.*, p. 92 ff.

¹ Cf. *Acts of Paul and Thecla*; *Passion of S. Perpetua*.

² Cf. Origen, c. *Celsum*, iii. 22; Julian (apud Cyril Alex., *contr. Iul.* x, P. G. lxxvi, col. 1015 ff.); Eunapius, *Vita Aedesii* (ed. 1822), p. 45; Ps-Apuleius, *Adlocutio ad Asclep.*

which, as we have seen, began with the earliest persecutions, had gathered strength, not only through successive and repeated persecutions, but also, and most of all, when they ceased. When the last fierce trial was over, the Church turned with grateful remembrance to the leaders in that long conflict with the powers of darkness; and when there was breathing space after the hideous desolation of the barbarian invasions, the minds of men went out once more and more than ever towards the heroes of the past. The period between about A. D. 325 and 450 is that within which the veneration of saints and martyrs won its way to a place of prominence in the Church's teaching, from which nothing but the Reformation could disturb it. This is the period in which the Fathers' praise of martyrdom reached its highest point of fervour, and was expressed in rhetorical addresses and appeals to the martyrs for the help of their prayers¹. It was in the course of these hundred years that the steady progress

¹ Cf. Greg. Naz., *Orat.* xxiv. 10, 11, 19; xliii. 82; Basil, *Hom. in xl Mart.* 8; *Ep.* ccclx. (alias ccv); Greg. Nyss., *De S. Theodoro Mart.* (P. G. xlv, cols. 745, 747); *De vita s. patr. Ephr. Syr.* (ibid. col. 849); Chrys., *In Genes. Hom.* xlv. 2; *In Ep. ii ad Cor. Hom.* xxvi. 5; Ephr. Syr., *Encom. in mart.* (*Opera gr.* t. iii, pp. 251, 254, Rome, 1743-6); *Encom. in Magn. Basil.* (ibid. t. ii, p. 296); Ambros., *De viduis*, 9; Hieron., *Ep.* cviii. 33.

towards regarding asceticism as the ideal of the Christian life for those who were denied the blessing of martyrdom culminated in an organized monasticism, and it was towards the close of this period that the cultus of the Blessed Virgin began, at any rate in the East, that upward movement which was destined to carry its object to a place of pre-eminence above all saints and martyrs throughout the world¹. To this time belong the more developed appeals to the departed for their prayers and their protection, which we find in the Catacombs—appeals which are certainly more elaborate than the mere ejaculations of an earlier date, but which do not yet disclose the presence of formal *practise* doctrine²—and the expression of a desire to be laid, not merely *inter sanctos* but *retro sanctos*, i.e. in closest contact with the bodies of the saints, so that the meritorious blood might filter through and keep from harm³.

¹ The development of the high cult of the Blessed Virgin was very slow in making way in the West and did not reach a climax before the seventh century. Vide *infra*, pp. 81-83.

² For a useful discussion of the age of the inscriptions, &c., in the Catacombs, cf. Roller, *Les Catacombes de Rome* (1881).

³ "Credimus aeternis illum tibi, Celse, uiretis
laetitiae et uitae ludere participem.
quem Complutensi mandauimus urbe, propinquis
coniunctum tumuli foedere martyribus ;

Pilgrimages are now undertaken not only to places associated with the life of Christ, but also to the martyrs' tombs, which quickly grew from simple *memoriae* to sumptuous basilicas, dedicated in theory to the honour of God, but practically in the popular mind devoted to the glory of the Saints. And finally there now begins that eager search and demand for relics by the people and (we may add) the supply of them in some cases by unscrupulous traders, of which the palmary instance is contained in the astonishing story of SS. Gervasius and Protasius¹.

ut de uicino sanctorum sanguine ducat
quo nostras illo purget in igne animas."

Paulin. Nol., *Poema* xxxiv. 603-608, *P. L.* 61, col. 689; cf. Ambrose, *De excessu fratris*, i. 18.

¹ See Appendix.

III

INVOCATION OF SAINTS APPEARS IN
PUBLIC WORSHIP

It may indeed be safely affirmed upon an impartial consideration of the evidence that by the beginning of the sixth century no single feature that marks the later form of the cultus of the Saints is wanting, save direct appeals to them in public worship. Extant service-books which can be referred to a time anterior to the eighth century confine themselves in this connexion to prayers to God that the Saints' prayers may be linked to those of the faithful, and the fact goes far to establish the contention that in this respect popular devotion had outstripped the informed piety and judgement of the responsible leaders and office-bearers of the Church.

The earliest liturgies, indeed, contain no instance of direct appeal to the Saints. I am aware that to some minds the distinction between direct and indirect invocation seems a distinction without a difference; but there is one consideration which indicates that the distinction here is real and important. To ask the departed themselves to help us by

their prayers argues a greater degree of assurance on our part as regards their actual state of knowledge and present activity than can be deduced from the expression of the hope that we may be helped by their prayers, or from the prayer to God that we may be so helped. Even S. Cyril of Jerusalem, in the description of Christian worship contained in his *Catechetical Lectures*, says no more than that "we make mention of those that have fallen asleep before us, first of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, that God may at their prayers and intercessions receive our supplication" (*Cat. Myst.*, v. 9). The Liturgy of S. James in similar terms makes commemoration of the Blessed Virgin, S. John Baptist, the apostles and evangelists, the prophets and patriarchs, S. Stephen, the first deacon and first martyr, and all saints . . . "not that we are worthy to commemorate their blessedness, but in order that they also, standing before Thy terrible and dreadful throne, may in turn make mention of our pitiable state, and that we may find grace and mercy before Thee, O Lord, to help in time of need¹." The

¹ For an opinion upon the value of the Liturgy of S. James, and of the Catechetical Lectures of S. Cyril, as representing early Christian feeling, see E. Bishop, *On the History of the Christian Altar* in the *Downside Review* for July, 1905; "the Liturgy of S. James, or the Hierosolymitan piety of

Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries pray thus to God, "Thou who didst dedicate the first fruits of thy holy deacon Stephen, grant, we beseech Thee, that he who made supplication even for his persecutors may stand before Thee as our intercessor."

Such expressions may be summed up in the phrase *Det Deus ut orent pro nobis*. This is surely in feeling very different from, and in doctrine far behind, the phrase *Ora, orate pro nobis*. And the question that of all others demands an answer at this stage of our inquiry is: "When did *Ora pro nobis* first appear in Christian public worship?" And it is unfortunately one to which in our present state of knowledge we cannot return a satisfactory reply.

Ora or *Orate pro nobis* is the refrain in the Litany which had the formal sanction of the Church of England from the middle of the eighth to the middle of the sixteenth century, and which is still in constant use in the Roman Communion. But the origin of the Invocations of Saints in the Litany is

S. Cyril, is the last quarter in which I should look for a true and untroubled rendering of the tone and spirit of Christian piety of the three earliest Christian centuries, the first to which I should turn to learn the newer developments, the new sense, feeling, religious sentiment, induced by or following on, the triumph of the Church," *op. cit.*, pp. 9, 10.

hidden from us. Conjecture has been busy with it, and a host of questions have been raised in respect of it. Is it of Roman, Greek, South Italian, Gallican, or Irish growth? Was it invented or introduced by a Bishop of Rome after the manner of the various liturgical and ceremonial additions to which the *Liber Pontificalis* bears witness? Is it an extension of the Greek ἐκτενής, the long prayer with several suffrages which is familiar to us in the Liturgies of S. Chrysostom and S. Basil? Is it an example of the private use, so to speak, of the diptychs which were recited at Mass from the sixth century onwards? Is it a product of monastic fervour? Is it an old heathen invocation spell adapted to Christian taste and purpose? Is it an invention independent of any previous form? What is the connexion between Kyrie eleison and the Litany? What does the word litany in itself really mean? The last two of this long list of queries have been answered, I venture to think, by Mr. Edmund Bishop¹; but the rest are still *sub iudice*.

The late Dr. H. Usener's suggestion that the Litany with its enumeration of saints and the constantly repeated burden is directly

¹ Cf. *Kyrie eleison*, *A Liturgical Consultation*; two articles in the *Downside Review* for December, 1899, and March, 1900.

modelled on the formulary which the Roman priest recited at the end of his *indigamenta*¹—that long list of “little gods” invoked because they could help on special occasions and had the custodianship of human life in all its incidents and accidents from the cradle to the grave—will probably have attraction for minds which are not afraid of discovering a heathen source for many existing pious customs, and can admit that the Church would not have accomplished her mission to the heathen races without borrowing and adopting some of their inoffensive rites. And it is of course *a priori* not inconceivable that the Church may have adapted and given Christian tone to heathen forms of prayer when she took over the basilicas and sundry articles of civil ceremonial in the fourth century. The fact that the Litany Procession of April 25 (S. Mark’s Day), which is termed *Litania Maior*, took the place of the heathen Roman festival procession of the Robigalia, probably under Pope Liberius (352–366)², does certainly dispose us to the belief that some of the old superstition may have survived in the Christian ceremony. But unfortunately we have

¹ Cf. *Alte Bittgänge in Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (1891).

² Cf. Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétien*³, p. 276.

no example of *indigitamenta* to check the plausible conjecture, and no one is agreed as to their exact nature or form. Ovid has versified for us the prayer which he heard on the occasion of one Robigalia¹, and while it bears a close resemblance to the farmer's prayer in Varro², it bears none whatever to any supplication in any extant litany.

The truth is that the whole problem of the Litany is shrouded in obscurity, an obscurity which may serve as an example or parable of the character of the doctrine which is expressed in the part connected with the Saints³. The invocations in the Litany had doubtless a long history below the surface before emerging into the light of public worship, sanctioned or ordered by the Church. The doctrine that the Saints may be appealed to directly also had a long subterranean existence before it was recognized by theologians as being according to the proportion of faith.

That the minds of all Christians, high and low, instructed and uneducated, were predis-

¹ *Fasti*, 4. 901 ff.

² *De re rustica*, 141.

³ It is a matter for sincere congratulation that the problem is in process of investigation by Mr. Edmund Bishop, who may be trusted to furnish us with all the evidence, and to make valuable and illuminating suggestions on the subject. See *Journ. of Theol. Studies*, Oct. 1905, p. 122 ff.

posed to it may be taken for granted ; that the people gave practical expression to it in their private devotions may be assumed ; but that the leaders of orthodox opinion did not give way to popular demand and popular pressure on this point as readily as they did on certain others may be inferred from the form which the commonly accepted belief in the intercessory activity of the Saints assumes in early liturgies, and from the absence of any regulation respecting the practice of invocation in public worship until that period which, from our ignorance of the forces at work in it, we are accustomed to call the Dark Ages. But beyond this we cannot go.

The assertion made by Bishop W. Forbes of Edinburgh (1634) that "those private addresses to the saints . . . which were begun to be used in the times of S. Basil and S. Gregory Nazianzen, were at last inserted in the public Litanies in the time of S. Gregory the Great," has recently been revived by Canon Newbolt and Mr. Darwell Stone in their *Appeal to Facts and Principles*¹. These writers refer the reader to pp. 691 and 821 E of the third volume of the Benedictine edition of S. Gregory's Works (issued first in

¹ *The Church of England, an Appeal, &c.* (1903), p. 56. Cf. Forbes, *Considerationes Modestae*, vol. ii, p. 265 (Library of Anglo-Cath. Theology, 1856).

1705 and again in 1768, reprinted in Migne, *P. L.*, vol. lxxviii). The first passage (from a *Liber Antiphonarius*) occurs among the Antiphons of the Litany on S. Mark's Day: *Sancta Dei Genetrix, ora pro nobis*. The Antiphonary in question is one first printed by Pamelius in 1571, reprinted several times from him by other editors, and finally by the Benedictine Fathers. Pamelius vouchsafes no information concerning the date of the MS. from which he printed it, except that it was written in "characters almost obliterated by age"¹. The Antiphonary itself contains a good deal of matter that is obviously posterior to the sixth century, and there seems to be little ground for believing that the Litany goes back to the time of S. Gregory, much less that it forms part of his genuine works. The second passage (from a *Liber Responsalis*) is a Respond in the Vesper Office for the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, and runs: "We betake us to thy protection where the feeble have found strength; and for this cause we sing praise to thee, O Virgin, Mother of God. Let us keep the birthday of the most blessed Virgin with deep devotion, in order that she may plead for us with the Lord Jesus Christ"².

¹ Cf. Pamelius *Liturgicon* (1571) I, Preface, and II, pp. 62-176.

² "Sub tua protectione confugimus, ubi infirmi ac-

With regard to this Respond and the book from which it comes, it is enough to point out that the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin was not adopted in the Roman church until about the time of the Trullan Council (692 A. D.)¹, i. e. almost a century later than S. Gregory².

Bishop Forbes may possibly have been misled by a so-called litany of S. Gregory, printed by Dom Arnold Wion in his *Lignum Vitae* (1595 A. D.), from a MS. of Monte Cassino. With regard to this document it is enough to quote what Dom Hugues Ménard, who was himself not too critical an editor, says in his notes on the Gregorian Sacramentary. "No one even slightly conversant with the study of ecclesiastical antiquity can believe a litany of this kind to be S. Gregory's, to say nothing of the invocation of S. Gregory which it contains and that of certain other saints who were still

ceperunt virtutem et propter hoc tibi psallimus, Dei Genetrix Virgo. Beatissimae Virginis Nativitatem devotissime celebremus, ut ipsa pro nobis intercedat ad Dominum Iesum Christum."

¹ The earliest reference to the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin is found in the works of Andrew of Crete, fl. 650 A. D. Cf. Hauck, *Realenc.*, vol. xx, p. 320, s.v. Maria.

² I gladly acknowledge the help I have received in elucidating this point from the late Mr. Edgar Hoskins and Mr. E. Bishop.

alive at the time of its use¹." Later writers on the subject may have also been led astray by Muratori (1748 A. D.), who prints a litany which has the invocation *S. Maria tu illum adiuva*. The fact that this occurs in a Mass for the Emperor is in itself clear evidence of post-Carolingian date. But Muratori's page heading to the whole of the section containing this Mass and other tenth-century matter is "Gregorianum"². The evidence adduced for addresses to the saints in the public litanies in the time of S. Gregory is therefore discredited, and we are left at least as far as concerns the West with an eighth-century document³. This is the Whitby

¹ "Nemo est vel leviter antiquitatis ecclesiasticae studiis imbutus qui eiusmodi litaniam illius (sc. S. Gregorii) esse arbitretur, ut omittam de invocatione Sancti Gregorii, et quorundorum sanctorum adhuc cum habita est viventium, quae in illa continetur." Bened. ed., 1705, III, p. 397; Migne, *P. L.*, lxxviii, col. 388.

² Cf. *Liturgia Romana*, II, 463.

³ The standard by which Dr. Theodor Schermann measures the age of MS. Cryptoferr. Γ β vi, which contains a litany with invocations, seems to be precarious. He assigns it to cent. vi-vii, not apparently on palaeological grounds, the only sure test, but because of the epithets which are applied to the Blessed Virgin. Cf. *Römische Quartalschrift*, 1903, p. 335 ff., and Mr. Bishop in *J. T. S.*, loc. cit. The addresses to the Blessed Virgin which occur in S. Gregory's *Dialogues* (I, 9 *De Bonifacio* . . . *episcopo*; IV, 17 *De transitu Musae puellae*) do not affect the argument of the text. In the former passage (a reference

Life of S. Gregory, written about A. D. 713¹.

"For that saint is indeed considered so saintly throughout all the world, that he is always by all men called Saint Gregory. Accordingly in the litanies in which we entreat the Lord on account of our transgressions, and the countless sins by which we offend him, we call Saint Gregory to our

to which I owe to the Rev. E. McClure) the bishop prays to the Virgin for means to repay a sum of money which he has taken from his nephew's money-box for the purpose of alms (cf. *Church Quarterly Rev.*, Oct., 1906). In the second, Musa has on her death-bed a vision of the Virgin, and expires crying "Ecce, Domina, veni." These are both purely private addresses, though the former, it is true, is uttered within the walls of a church. The addresses to the B. V. M., χαίρει Μαρία κεχαρισμένη· ὁ Κύριος μετὰ σου κ.τ.λ., which occur on ostraca of the fifth or sixth and seventh century (cf. Crum, *Coptic Ostraca*, London, 1902, p. 3; Reitzenstein, *Zwei Religionsgeschichtliche Fragen*, Strassburg, 1901, p. 112 ff., controlled by C. Schmidt, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, 1903, ii, p. 384) are in the nature of versicles or antiphons and cannot be classed as invocations (cf. E. Preuschen, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 1906, p. 642).

¹ "Iste enim sanctus utique per omnem terram tam sanctus habetur ut semper ab omnibus utique sanctus Gregorius nominatur. Unde laetaniis quibus Dominum pro nostris imploramus excessibus atque innumeris peccatis quibus eum offendimus, Sanctum Gregorium nobis in amminiculum vocamus, cum sanctis scilicet apostolis et martyribus." *Life of S. Gregory*, edited by Abbot Gasquet (Westminster, 1904), p. 45.

aid together of course with the apostles and martyrs."

About a generation later we have the order of the Council of Cloveshoe of A. D. 747 contained in its sixteenth and seventeenth canons, which are so important for our purpose that they must be translated in full from Haddan and Stubbs's *Councils*.

"*Concerning the Litany days.* They determined in the sixteenth chapter that the Litanies or Rogations shall be very reverently performed by the clergy and all the people on the following days: the seventh before the kalends of May (April 25), according to the use of the Roman Church where this service has also the name of the Greater Litany. That, secondly, according to the custom of our forefathers, the three days before the Ascension of the Lord into heaven shall be kept with fasting until the ninth hour and with celebration of masses: and that all the people, laying aside those vain customs which are practised by the mass of men, either from carelessness or lack of knowledge, to wit, games and horse races and great banquets, shall in fear and trembling display in open procession the sign of Christ's passion and of our eternal redemption and the relics of the saints, and humbly implore on bended knee God's pardon for their sins.

“Concerning the manner of keeping the Festival of S. Gregory and Augustine. The seventeenth injunction ordered that the birthday of the blessed Pope Gregory and also the seventh before the kalends of June, which is the burial day of Saint Augustine archbishop and confessor who was sent to the English people by the aforesaid Pope our Father Gregory, and first brought us the knowledge of the Faith, the Sacrament of Baptism and the knowledge of our heavenly home, shall be, as is fitting, reverently observed by all. Also that each of these days shall be kept as a feast by ecclesiastical and monastic persons and that the name of the same our blessed father and doctor S. Augustine shall always be mentioned in the singing of the Litany after the name of S. Gregory¹.”

¹ *“De Diebus Laetaniarum. Sexto decimo condixerunt capitulo: Ut Letaniae, id est, rogationes, a clero omnique populo his diebus cum magna reverentia agantur, id est die septimo kalendarum Maiarum, juxta ritum Romanae ecclesiae: quae et Laetania major apud eam vocatur. Et item quoque secundum morem priorum nostrorum, tres dies ante Ascensionem Domini in coelos cum jejunio usque ad horam nonam et Missarum celebratione venerantur: non admixtis vanitatibus, uti mos est plurimis, vel negligentibus, vel imperitis, id est, in ludis et equorum cursibus, et epulis majoribus; sed magis, cum timore et tremore, signo passionis Christi nostraeque aeternae redemptionis, et reliquiis sanctorum*

On these two canons it is to be remarked (1) that the words of XVI, "Litanies or rogations," do not necessarily imply that any Invocation of Saints was used on the Rogation Days. As Mr. Bishop has made quite clear in his *Kyrie eleison*, "rogations" need not mean more than penitential supplications. The substance of the rogation processions was apparently antiphons and responds with perhaps the prayers or collects which in some quarters accompanied the singing of psalms; (2) that in the same canon, "according to the use of the Roman Church" clearly refers to the day, S. Mark's Day, April 25, on which the rogations, i. e. the *litania maior*, were celebrated at Rome, and does not tell us anything about the contents of the service; (3) that Canon XVII

Ejus coram portatis, omnis populus genu flectendo
Divinam pro delictis humiliter exorat indulgentiam."

"*De Festivitate colenda sancti Gregorii et Augustini.* Septimo decimo constitutum est praecepto: Ut dies natalitius beati Papae Gregorii, et dies quoque depositionis, qui est vii kalendas Junii, Sancti Augustini Archiepiscopi atque Confessoris, qui genti Anglorum missus a praefato Papa et patre nostro Gregorio, scientiam fidei, Baptismi sacramentum, et coelestis patriae notitiam primus adtulit, ab omnibus sicut decet, honorifice venerantur. Ita ut uterque dies ab ecclesiasticis et monasterialibus feriatus habeatur, nomenque ejusdem beati patris et doctoris nostri Augustini, in Laetaniae decantatione, post Sancti Gregorii vocationem semper dicatur." *Councils and Eccl. Documents*, vol. iii, p. 368.

is aware of a litany in which S. Gregory's name is mentioned but into which S. Augustine's is not yet introduced. Now it happens that there exists just such a litany of the English Church invoking S. Gregory but not S. Augustine, and therefore probably belonging to a date anterior to the Council of Cloveshoe¹. We have here in all probability the earliest example of a Latin litany in existence, if it be not the earliest example of a litany in any language. It is contained in MS. Reg. 2 A xx in the British Museum and is ascribed to the early eighth or the seventh century—the editors of the Irish *Liber Hymnorum*² incline to the earlier date. It is printed by Mr. F. E. Warren in the Appendix to his edition of the Bangor *Antiphonary*³, and more recently by Dom Kuypers in the appendix to the *Book of Cerne*⁴.

Mr. Edmund Bishop has recently subjected

¹ I say "probably", because, as Mr. E. Bishop points out to me, the Council decrees were subscribed by South Humber clergy only. MS. Reg. 2 A xx is probably of Northumbrian origin, and a scribe writing (say) at Lindisfarne may not have felt that the Cloveshoe decree was binding in those regions. But the probability becomes a certainty if the date of the MS. be not later than the earlier part of the eighth century, as on palaeographical grounds seems to be the case.

² Henry Bradshaw Soc. Publications (1897).

³ Henry Bradshaw Soc. Publications (1895), p. 89.

⁴ See *Book of Cerne*. Cambridge (1902), p. 211.

the litany in MS. B. M. Reg. 2 A xx to careful scrutiny in connexion with the litany in the Stowe Missal and two litanies in Greek contained in the Cotton MSS., Galba A xviii and Titus D xviii respectively¹. His conclusion is that the Greek litany represented by these two last MSS. is the original of the Latin litany of Stowe and 2 A xx; that it came to these islands from Rome, and that the internal evidence points to Sergius, Bishop of Rome from 687 to 701 A.D., as its originator. Pope Sergius had relations with England quite sufficient to offer occasion for the introduction of such a service. He consecrated S. Wilbrord as archbishop of the Frisians in 695 A.D.; he corresponded with Ceolfrid, Abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, and he was concerned in the quarrel between Wilfrith and Bertwald, Archbishop of Canterbury, and was probably responsible in the last resort for the calling of the Council of Estrefield². The *Liber Pontificalis* reveals him as a man especially interested in all that concerns the public worship of the Church. The first recorded use of *Agnus Dei* in the Mass at

¹ *Journal of Theological Studies* (1905), vol. vii, No. 25, p. 122 ff.

² Cf. J. T. S., *ibid.*; Beda, *Hist. Eccles.*, ed. Plummer (1896), vol. ii, p. 287; Hunt, *History of the English Church from 597 to 1066* (1899), p. 161.

Rome occurs during his pontificate ; he gave impulse to the Adoration of the Cross, and to the Veneration of the Blessed Virgin, ordering processional litanies for her four feasts of Nativity, Annunciation, Purification, and Assumption¹. This devotion to S. Mary on the part of Sergius is not in the least surprising when we consider his origin. Although born in Sicily, he was by parentage an Eastern, a native of Antioch in Syria, and therefore Greek speaking. Now it was the Eastern Church that first assigned to the Blessed Virgin a place as protagonist in the solemn drama of mankind's redemption. All the great festivals in her honour are of Eastern origin, and one of them at least, that of the Assumption, may be traced to a Syrian source². Syria was indeed the soil in which her cultus seems to have especially flourished³. There would appear to be a certain native cause for this veneration of S. Mary in the East and particularly in Syria. Her cultus received notable impulse and authoritative sanction by the decrees of the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. and the victory of the

¹ Cf. *Liber Pontificalis*, s.v. Sergius I, with Duchesne's notes (Paris, 1886), p. 376.

² Cf. Lucius, *op. cit.*, p. 453.

³ "L'exagération du culte de la Vierge est un fait tout syrien," Renan, *Marc-Aurèle* (1882), p. 145, note 1.

predicate Θεοτόκος which was then and there secured; but devotion to her was doubtless deeply rooted in the religious life of the masses long before, and may be described as a piece of popular belief. As has been already noted in another connexion, the heathen that crowded into the Church when the Roman empire became Christian brought with them many of the religious notions in which they had been nurtured. One of these was the idea of a divine female Principle, resulting in a very general worship of female deities. The transference of this concept into Christian thought was facilitated by the postulate of a human agency at work in the process of Incarnation, and by the fact that to many of the Fathers of the primitive church, S. Mary stood for the antitype of Eve just as Christ was the antitype of Adam. The divine mother, moreover, made special appeal to Semitic heathenism through the tender and the natural associations connected with maternity and womanhood, and it is quite consonant with the genius of Semitic religion that the thoughts evoked by the figure of the Virgin Mother of God should find expression in utterances of peculiar warmth and adoration¹. And thus we hear without surprise in all the writings

¹ Cf. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*² (1894), pp. 57, 58.

of the Syrian Fathers, from the fourth century onwards, in homilies and odes and hymns, the steady diapason of her praise. We may not assert that the fervour deepens with the roll of the years, for in warmth of expression and religious zeal S. Ephrem Syrus († 373 A.D.) is unsurpassable and unsurpassed. But together with him Cyrillonas of Edessa (fl. 396 A.D.), Rabbula of Edessa († 435 A.D.), Balaeus (of Aleppo ? circa 400 A.D.), Isaac of Antioch (fl. 450 A.D.), and Jacob of Serug († 522 A.D.),¹ sound a note of ecstatic adoration such as hardly rises again until the Middle Ages, when S. Anselm poured out his heart of love in prayer to the mother of the Lord; and Anselm was very probably influenced by Syrian hymns².

The poets of the Western Church in earlier days show much greater restraint in handling this theme than either Syrians or Greeks. S. Ambrose, for instance, in his *Veni Redemptor*, despite the stress which he lays upon the doctrine of the miraculous birth, falls far short of the language of S. Ephrem in describing S. Mary's part and function. Sedulius, in his Christmas hymns, directs attention rather to the infant Saviour than

¹ Cf. G. Bickell, *Ausgewählte Gedichte syrischer Väter* (1872); *Ausg. Schriften syr. Väter* (1874).

² Cf. Lucius, *op. cit.*, p. 520.

to His mother. If in his utterance we can sometimes catch echoes of an eastern phantasy, as in the familiar lines—

“ And He whose bounty feedeth all
At Mary’s breast Himself was fed ”¹—

such echoes are at most but rare, and it may be affirmed that the later Latin carols which sing the mother by the manger cradle are due to the influence of Greek and Syrian poets.

It would be untrue to say that Western theologians were averse from speculation concerning the life-history and destiny of S. Mary, or even indifferent to them. But it is commonly admitted that they were, as a rule, of cooler and less emotional a mood, and were for the most part content in this respect to accept and adopt ideas that first took shape in the East. Moreover, Roman teachers and those that looked to Rome for guidance were far more critical than the Easterns in the matter of the apocryphal literature which supplied the rich particulars of S. Mary’s life in such lavish abundance. The contrast of thought here is clearly seen in the respective attitudes of East and West towards the book which told the story of her Assumption. The Greek original of the *De transitu Mariæ*,

¹ From Sedulius, *A solis ortus cardine*, translated by J. Ellerton and others.

a translation ascribed to Melito of Sardis, was generally accepted in the East without demur, and enjoyed a wide vogue in Syria and Arabia. But Gelasius I (Pope 492-496), in the decree which passes under his name concerning books to be rejected (the first *Index prohibitorum* on record), describes the work in question as repudiated and banned by the whole Roman Church, and as involving its authors and leaders in eternal ruin¹, while the writer of the epistle to Paula and Eustochium, *De Assumptione B. Mariae*, bids his correspondents, if by chance the book should fall into their hands, to regard it as undoubtedly spurious².

Notwithstanding papal denunciation and fatherly warning, the festival Πανήγυρις Κοιμήσεως, which the *Transitus Mariae* did so much to foster, found its way at length into the Roman Calendar, together with the Feast of the Nativity, some time in the seventh century.

¹ "Non solum repudiata, uerum etiam ab omni Romana catholica ecclesia eliminata atque cum suis auctoribus auctorumque sequacibus sub anathematis indissolubili uinculo in aeternum damnata." Gel., *Decretum de libris*, P. L. 59, col. 164. In favour of the Gelasian authorship of the decree cf. Zöpfel and Mirbt (*Hauck*, *Realencykl.*³ s. v. Gelasius I). Against it cf. Bardenhewer, *Patrologie*, p. 577.

² Ps.-Hieron., *Ep. ad Paulam et Eustoch.*, *De Ass. B. M.* in the Plantine (1578) ed. of S. Jerome's works, tom. ix, p. 46 A.

These general considerations on the subject of the cultus of the Blessed Virgin were really necessary in order to indicate the direction in which to look for a Western analogy to the temper of mind which gave birth to the Syrian hymns. It is clearly not to Rome that we must turn, nor to a teacher of the school of Roman thought. Now it may reasonably be expected that Sergius, Bishop of Rome though he was, had inherited the glowing Syrian imagination and looked with favour upon Syrian expressions of devotion, and nothing is more likely than that he should have been forward in introducing impassioned apostrophe to S. Mary and other saints and angels into the worship of the churches whose spiritual progress he had at heart. How was it with the land to which we may assume that he sent the litany of Galba A xviii with its invocations of the saints? There were, as is well known, two main influences at work moulding the English Church in the seventh and eighth centuries, the one disciplined and practical, emanating from Rome which sent forth Augustine and his companions; the other unconstrained and imaginative, derived from Ireland by way of the monastic settlements on the West Coast of Scotland. Under which of these influences is it most likely

that such a phenomenon as the invocations in the litany would develop?¹ The words in which Mr. Bishop has on more than one occasion described the character of Irish religion and the kind of devotion that answers to its needs are the best argument for my purpose, and I will therefore venture to borrow his latest utterance on the point.

“The ejaculatory, litanic, asyndetic, type of prayer is peculiarly suited to the Irish genius. We have only to observe the prayers common among that people from the *Lorica* of S. Patrick downwards. The publication of the *Book of Cerne* and of MS. 2 A xx affords abundant, and genuine, material for study. But there is more. The Irish masters in the early days of England’s conversion were by nature attracted to solitude; they strove, were even able, to combine this inclination of theirs with the active duties of the apostolate; and many of their English disciples imbibed much of their spirit. We must not look to the ordinary life of Jarrow and Wearmouth in this matter; but the *Life of S. Guthlac* by

¹ It is not without significance that MS. Reg. 2 A xx, which Mr. Bishop regards as founded upon Galba A xviii, was written in Northumbria, a country very largely evangelized from Iona, i. e. ultimately from Ireland, which was only gradually brought into line with the methods and sentiment of the Roman mission after the Council of Whitby in 664 A. D.

Felix gives a lively presentment of a type of spiritual life that was common in England so long as the influence of the Irish teachers lasted. But if men such as these lived in solitude, they still were not alone; their world was peopled by spirits, angels, good and bad, all either friends or foes, with whom they were in continual communion or conflict. Given, too, the particular stage of religious development in Western Europe we are bound to believe that in the world thus peopled with spirits, the ancient martyrs and the hermits, who had suffered and had conquered in the fight, were present too. In such a spiritual atmosphere as this nothing is more easy than to understand, once the impulse given, the development and rapid spread of such a devotion as that which we call the litany of the saints. On the supposition that the Greek litany reached England in (say) the last decade of the seventh century, I think it is not unreasonable to expect that even a dozen years may have sufficed for the propagation of the new devotion at least among those that still gave the tone to the common religious public of the time¹."

The result of the somewhat lengthy discussion in which we have just been engaged is briefly this: We cannot tell in our present

¹ *J. T. S.* (1905), vol. vii, p. 131.

state of knowledge who it was that originated the cry of *Ora pro nobis* in the Litany, nor where exactly it first took form; but from what we know of the Christian world from the fourth to the eighth century we may affirm with safety that the conditions and influences which produced the hymns in honour of the Mother of God¹ on the one hand, and the Lorica of Loding on the other, are those in which devotion to the saints taking the form of direct appeal to them in prayer would receive special encouragement. These conditions belong to a luxuriant and highly imaginative religion rather than to the religion of sobriety and restraint which was the mark of Rome in early times and is the mark of the English Church to-day. We shall surely do well to pause before we admit the adoption of public devotions which belong probably in origin, and certainly in their development, to a popular religion expressing itself in terms of sentimentalism and extravagance.

¹ Cf. G. Bickell, *Ausgewählte Schriften syr. Väter*, p. 259 ff. (Rabbula of Edessa).

IV

INVOCATIONS REMOVED FROM ENGLISH
PUBLIC WORSHIP

THE Litany with its Invocations of Saints, imposed by the Council of Cloveshoe, as we have just seen, on every ecclesiastical person, remained practically unchallenged in the English Church throughout the Middle Ages. It was used in one form or another, with very slight variations, at fixed times and on special occasions, either in procession or in Church, until 1544¹.

The fourteenth century saw renderings of the Litany in the English tongue, but it was not until 1544 that an official English version was put forth for use in the general rogations and processions which the King had commanded in the previous year in view of the troubled state of land and nation. This Litany was prepared by Cranmer on the basis of the old Latin forms, Luther's Litany of 1529, and the *ἐκτεναί* of the Greek liturgies. The only point which concerns us here is Cranmer's treatment of the invocation of Saints. Luther had struck them out; Cranmer reduced them

¹ See Procter-Frere, *History of the Prayer Book*, p. 413.

in number to three comprehensive clauses, viz. “(1) S. Mary, (2) all holy angels and arch-angels and all holy orders of blessed spirits, (3) all holy patriarchs and prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors and virgins, and all the blessed company of heaven, pray for us.” The Litany appeared in a revised form in the King’s Primer of 1545, and the clauses were then retained, but they were removed bodily from Edward VI’s Litany, which was thus brought into line with the Collect for All Saints’ Day, and with the Prayer for the Church Militant. The wording of these prayers represents, I venture to think, the true teaching of the Church of England concerning the duty of the living towards the memory of the departed. It is reverent, it is according to the teaching of Scripture, it leaves no room for superstitious development.

The question has recently been raised whether the word “invocation” as used in connexion with prayers to the Saints did not change its meaning between 1537 and 1553¹. In the former year the Bishops issued the *Institution of a Christian Man*, in which “comprecation”, i. e. praying to the Saints to be intercessors with us and for us, is definitely sanctioned, while “invocation” of them is

¹ See Letters to the *Guardian* for Oct. 5 and Nov. 9, 1898, and D. Stone, *Invocation of Saints*, p. 36 (Longmans, 1903).

definitely condemned. By "invocation" here the Bishops clearly intended the direct demand for spiritual or temporal blessings such as God alone could grant. *The King's Book* of 1543 implicitly allows the distinction, and the word "invocation" is again used in Henry's Primer (1545) in the same sense, viz. of asking, not the prayers of the Saints, but direct gifts from them.

On the other hand, Article XXIII of 1553 condemns "the doctrine of school authors concerning invocation of Saints". Was then the word as used in that year different in meaning from the same word as used in 1537 and 1545? This is unlikely, and the most reasonable account of the matter is not that the word changed its meaning, but that from the first there were two uses of it, a strict and a loose, the former intending the direct appeal for gifts and benefits, the latter intending the appeal for help by prayer. The meaning of the word must be in each case determined by the context. That the word admitted of a double use is made clear by the case of John Lambert, martyred in 1538. The court, under the presidency of Archbishop Wareham, plainly distinguished between invocation of Saints and prayers to them. Thus the fourteenth of the forty-five articles objected against the prisoner ran:

"Whether holy martyrs, apostles and confessors departed from this world, ought to be honoured and called upon, and prayed unto?" Lambert replies by quoting S. Augustine's words in the *De vera religione* (c. xlv), "*Non sit nobis religio cultus hominum mortuorum,*" which he then expounds in English for the benefit of his hearers that know no Latin; he then continues: "as touching invocation, that is to wit, calling upon them, we have in Scripture how we should call upon Almighty God in all necessities or troubles. Therefore I say, as I said before, that thanks be to God, albeit I am, as I shewed before, void of such great prudency as others be well endowed with, yet I see partly how their great reasons be not very substantial, whereby they contend by the treaty of reason when authority faileth them, to shew that we ought to pray to Saints departed to be mediators for us to Christ. . . ." He evidently assumes praying to the Saints as comprehended in invocation of them.

There was a further separate question addressed to him, "Whether the saints in heaven, as mediators, pray for us." To this he answered that he "believed Saints to pray for us as petitioners but not as mediators"¹.

¹ See Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, vol. v, p. 196 ff. (ed. 4, R. T. S.); cf. also Coverdale, ii, 249, 475; Hooper, i, 35; Latimer, i, 234, in the editions of the *Parker Society*. Note

With regard to the word "Romish" in our Article XXII there is every reason to believe that it was deliberately intended as a weapon against the extreme mediaeval party¹, but there is no reason to suppose that when the revisers of our Articles in 1563 substituted *doctrina Romanensium* for *doctrina scholasticorum* they had so far surrendered the standpoint of the reformers of 1553 as to sanction the scholastic doctrine, much less to desire its rehabilitation. The "school authors" were indeed past and gone. To condemn them by name was but to beat the air. But though the teachers were no more, the system which they had founded was still bearing fruit in the practices of the extreme party, and it was obviously natural for practical men dealing with a living evil to employ a term which had a living meaning.

But even supposing, for the sake of argument, that Art. XXII has in view not the teaching of the schoolmen, not the formulated doctrines of Peter Lombard and S. Thomas, but only the popular current teaching by the extreme mediaeval party, in what respect would a recovery of the scholastic doctrine

also that the clauses of invocation were blotted out of the Primers in 1580.

¹ Cf. Hardwick, *History of the Articles*, p. 410; Gibson, *The Thirty-Nine Articles*, ii, p. 537.

benefit us to-day? The object of our article would then be identical with that of Canon XIV of the Council of Trent at its twenty-fifth session, *De Invocatione Sanctorum*, etc., "All superstition in the invocation of saints is to be put down."

Can it be maintained that the strong statement of the Tridentine fathers has been effectual in removing superstition? Can any one say this who has visited Brittany or Naples? No doubt superstition is better than indifference, and it may be argued that the beliefs of Bretons and South Italians are well suited to their peculiar temperaments; but few in England would care to run the risk of embarrassing our national religion with the terms in which those beliefs are often expressed.

V

POPULAR RELIGION NOT THE BEST WAY

THE main contention of the foregoing pages is that Invocation of Saints, whether we mean thereby appeals to the saints for their prayers, or appeals to them for gifts and blessings, is a product of popular religion, i.e. of religion heady and sentimental in character, easily lapsing into superstition, and founded on no solid theological basis. To this contention I foresee that it will be objected that our blessed Lord Himself accepted and by accepting sanctioned many articles of the popular religion of His day; that the Church borrowed much that is valuable from popular religion; and that popular religion and especially that result of it with which we are concerned was of immense service in preaching the Gospel to the heathen whom the cultus of the martyrs moved as all the treatises of Origen and of S. Augustine would never have moved them¹.

In reply to the first of these objections it is enough to adopt S. Paul's words to the Athenians and say that there have always

¹ Cf. Albert Dufoureaux, *Le Christianisme des foules*, in the *Revue d'Histoire et de Littérature religieuses*, 1899, pp. 239-69.

been conditions of thought as well as times of ignorance that God has overlooked; in reply to the second a reference will suffice to the common experience that just as sound conclusions are often supported by fallacious arguments, so safe positions may be reached by different and devious ways. A man who has reached the shore by way of the bridge does not regret that he did not have to struggle through the stream, and will not advise others standing on the brink to try its dangers. We may rejoice that "in every way . . . Christ has been proclaimed", but that does not prevent our holding that there is a better and a worse way.

VI

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS AS AFFECTED
BY INVOCATIONS

THERE remains the question which was postponed from the beginning of our investigation : Would the reintroduction into our worship of the invocation of saints deepen and quicken our sense of the Communion of Saints ?

In order to answer this question we must briefly consider, first, the history of the clause *sanctorum communionem* in the Apostles' Creed, and, secondly, the character of the doctrine which it conveys. The first appearance of the clause in creed form is in the *De fide sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri* recently discovered by Dom G. Morin, who has the support of Harnack and Kattenbusch in assigning it to the saint whose name it bears in the MS.¹ Here it stands in a remarkable connexion, the significance of which will appear presently, "credo remissionem peccatorum in sancta ecclesia catholica, sanctorum communionem, carnis resurrectionem ad uitam aeternam." It is evidently connected by the writer not merely with "Catholic church" but with

¹ See *Revue Bénédictine*, Jan. 1904, pp. 1-9; *Revue d'Histoire et de Littérature religieuses*, 1904, p. 226 ff.

remission of sins within the church. With this creed must probably be associated the Armenian creed, for the knowledge of which we are indebted to Dr. Caspari and the late Dr. Catergian¹. Although only extant in a very late MS. (fourteenth century?) this creed bears marks of great antiquity and suggests a primitive document as its ultimate basis. It offers several points of close resemblance to S. Jerome's symbol, among them being "communion of saints", and a little later, "remission of sins in the holy church." As Dom Morin points out, S. Jerome may very well have become acquainted with the confessions of faith in use by the churches of Asia Minor when he passed through those regions before settling in Syria about 374 A. D.

The clause next appears in the homily *De Symbolo* of Niceta of Remesiana (circa 400 A. D.): "Therefore thou believest that thou wilt attain to the communion of saints²." Next we have it in the homilies of Faustus of Riez (circa 480 A. D.) and his school, e.g.: "We must now pass on to the communion of saints. This expression confutes those who slanderously assert that the dust of the saints and

¹ Caspari, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Taufsymbols* (Christiana, 1869), ii, p. 11 ff.; Catergian, *De fidei symbolo quo Armenii utuntur observationes* (Vienna, 1893).

² Cf. *Niceta of Remesiana*, c. 10, ed. A. E. Burn (Cambridge, 1904), pp. lxxx-lxxxiii, cxli, clx, 48.

friends of God ought not to be had in honour, and who do not think that reverence should be shown by monuments to the glorious memory of the blessed martyrs¹." And again in the sermons of Pseudo-Augustine, which are certainly Gallican, and possibly the work of Caesarius of Arles, 470-542 A. D.: "The communion of saints: that is, let us abide in fellowship and communion of hope with those saints who have died in the faith which we received²."

These last authorities show that the Gallican church had by the end of the fifth century come to regard the clause as a fixed addition to the old Roman creed. If we accept the theory of a relation between the Hieronymian and Armenian creeds through a common ancient document, we have

¹ "Sequitur: Ut transeamus ad sanctorum communionem. Illos hic sententia ista confundit, qui sanctorum et amicorum Dei cineres non in honore debere esse blasphemant, qui beatorum martyrum gloriosam memoriam reuerentia monumentorum colendam esse non credunt." Faustinus *De symbolo*, ed. Caspari, *Alte u. neue Quellen* (1879), p. 273. It must be noted that the veneration of relics here mentioned was closely attached to and developed concomitantly with that of departed saints.

² "Sanctorum communionem; id est, cum illis sanctis, qui in hac quam suscepimus fide defuncti sunt, societate et spei communione teneamur." Ps.-Aug., Migne, *P. L.* xxxix, col. 2193.

no difficulty in accounting for the passage of the clause from East to West. Among Niceta's flock in Dacia there must have been descendants of those Goths who first learnt Christianity from the prisoners whom they had carried away from Asia Minor at the time of the great invasions under Valerian and Gallienus. The Bishop himself had relations with Gaul, and was especially popular in church circles there and in Britain. It is therefore not at all surprising that a clause which came stamped with his authority should have found a place in Gallican formularies, nor that it should have quickly acquired a meaning different from that which either Niceta or its originators attached to it. We shall be in the way of learning what the original meaning was, if we can discover the occasion of its introduction into the creed. The occasion suggested by Dom Morin is the baptismal controversy of 256 A. D., when the churches of Asia Minor under Firmilian of Caesarea made common cause with S. Cyprian and the church of Africa. In this case the clause would express the view of the rigorist party, who demanded the rebaptism of heretics, and regarded them, unless rebaptized, as a *communio malorum* outside the *communio sanctorum*, i. e. the fellowship of the Catholic Church, which must refuse all

connexion with whosoever had not received regular baptism. The clause would in effect be an anti-Novatian weapon. Thus Dom Morin, as against Dr. Harnack and Dr. Swete, who, writing before the discovery of the *De Fide* of S. Jerome, respectively regard the clause as anti-Vigilantian or anti-Donatist in purpose. In any case it seems clear that the clause was already of long standing in the creed when Faustus of Riez turned it to his own account. The importance of this observation is that it removes from the words *sanctorum communio* that original and immediate connexion with saint-worship which Harnack postulates. Harnack does not indeed go so far as to assert that *sanctorum communio* precisely means invocation of saints, but he does say that the earliest expounders of the clause understood by it communion with the saints departed¹, and he advances in support of his contention the words of Faustus already quoted. To this it may be replied that a controversial fling (for it is nothing more) does not render Faustus an irrefragable witness as to the primitive meaning of the words,

¹ "Die ältesten Symbolerklärungen deuten den Ausdruck . . . nicht im Augustinischen, anti-donatistischen Sinne, sondern fassen ihn als Gemeinschaft mit den vollendeten Heiligen (oder der vollendeten Heiligen)," *Das Apostol. Glaubensbekenntnis*, 1892, p. 32. Then follows the quotation from Faustus.

and that writers seeking a phrase whereby to safeguard the veneration of the saints would have selected one more free from ambiguity than this. That there came to be a connexion between the Communion of Saints and veneration of saints and relics is not to be denied ; Faustus supplies clear evidence of the fact ; but if Dom Morin and Dr. Swete are right in their premisses the clause was framed with disciplinary intention. The true church is a *communio sanctorum* which stands aloof from heretics.

No one could for a moment wish that the Church of England should to-day revert to an interpretation so narrow and so rigorist ; but it is surely much to be desired that she should hold fast that interpretation which has been put upon it by Andrewes, Pearson, and a host of other witnesses among her members and which is at once more natural, more primitive, and more scriptural than that of Faustus, adroit and effective as it was. It is natural, for the category of saints does not exclude the living ; it is primitive¹, for the thought of the fellowship of all believers, whether triumphant or militant, runs through all the earliest Christian literature ; it is scrip-

¹ Cf. *Passio S. Perpetuae*, 1 "Ut et uos communionem habeatis cum sanctis martyribus." Cf. Cyril. Hier. *Cat. Myst.* xviii. 23-7.

tural, for the communion with Jesus, the Head of the mystical body, implies communion with all the members (cf. 1 John i. 3). To exclude the living from the class of saints in communion, or to admit them to a secondary place in it is to empty the phrase of half its beauty and significance. For the Communion of Saints, as our great Anglican doctors understand it, is surely the fellowship of the faithful in Christ in a union untouched by death¹. It is association in view of a common object, viz. the extension of the Kingdom of God in which all saints, all set apart for service, whether in the body or out of the body, are engaged.

Now we simply do not know what means for advancing this object lie within the power of the departed. The New Testament is most reticent in its description of their state; but what we learn from its pages points to a condition of rest and quiescence. They are fallen asleep (1 Thess. iv. 13-15; 1 Cor. xv. 18); they rest from their labours; the souls beneath the altar cry aloud indeed, but it is for vengeance, and the answer comes not in the form of knowledge of what passes or is to pass on earth, but in the promise of peace (Rev. xiv. 13). The penitent thief is simply told of

¹ Cf. Pearson, *On the Creed*, art. ix.

a presence with Christ. The conviction that our dead are in His keeping Who holds all souls in life, and that He will bring them with Him, should be enough for us. To attempt to know more is to wish to be wiser than Scripture, whose studied reserve on the point is surely an indication that our thoughts should be directed to judgement first of all and then to the great after-life with its possibilities of clearer knowledge (1 Cor. xiii) and fuller service, rather than to the intermediate state which may well be as a sleep in the night, or, if it be a waking, is probably concerned with other cares and higher interests than those of earth.

On the other hand, for us who remain below for a little space the duty is clear; it is to concentrate our thoughts on our great Leader. Any diversion of attention will only delay the accomplishment of our end, and we know only too well that having recourse to human beings often loosens our hold on the Divine. It is true that we ask each other for help in prayer, but it is derogatory to the rightful dignity of prayer and a misunderstanding of its true purpose to do so simply from a wish that a larger volume of appeal may more surely compel an answer from the throne of Grace. The final object of prayer is the increase of our knowledge of

God and of ourselves. We ask our friends to pray for us because often they know us better than we do ourselves, and they can interpret and convey our needs. But we have no certain knowledge that the blessed dead are acquainted with our present needs, and it is a misdirection of our powers to seek for help where we are not sure of finding it. Prayer (and this solemn appeal to the departed partakes of the nature of prayer) demands the exercise of a certain economy if it is to fulfil the function for which God has given us the hearty desire thereto.

It may indeed be argued that energy is liberated by the expenditure of energy, and this is undoubtedly true of faith and love. Love of our neighbour kindles love of God, and love of God widens and deepens love of man. But the dynamics of prayer are surely of a different character and stand in a different category. Faith is a passion equally with love, if indeed they may not be regarded as two aspects of a single emotion. The Christian belief in God is like a stream which carries away with overmastering force the man upon whom it descends. He has but to surrender himself to it and obey the promptings of the new instincts of affection which are called forth in him by its gracious influence. Upon him is laid the *beata necessitas parendi*. But

prayer is only so far a passion as it is the spontaneous outpouring of a strong emotion. It is more essentially an action in the execution of which all the powers of the higher nature, and that at extreme tension, co-operate with the Spirit of God working in the heart, and the strain upon the intellect and will and imagination is so great that diffusion of energy is here inevitably accompanied by an impoverishment of the current which it is our difficult duty to keep clear and strong. This consideration will discount the strangely circuitous method which to Dr. Pusey's thinking was the only justifiable one to pursue in this matter, viz. that we should ask God to put it into the saints' minds to pray for us.

Finally, it seems to me (and a statement of personal conviction is permissible when Scripture and the Church speak with no definite utterance) that to exalt the saints departed into a separate class specially endowed and specially powerful to help and to call upon them, as the Western Churches of the Roman obedience do, is to lessen rather than to increase our sense of fellowship with them. It tends to obliterate the fact that they are fellow-servants with us, and lays the way open to the rebuke which angels and a saint bestowed on those that would fall down and

worship them (Rev. xix. 10, xxii. 8, 9 ; Acts x. 26). On the other hand, if we follow the popular custom of the Eastern Church¹, which certainly with a noble desire to deepen the sense of the Communion of Saints, but oblivious, as it would appear, of the ultimate ground upon which the custom rests², encourages her members to invoke the dear ones whom they have known on earth to intercede for them with God, we are not expressing a doctrine nor are we following a specifically Christian practice. Khomiakoff's beautiful and familiar lines on the death of his children, which are quoted by Mr. Darwell Stone in his *Invocation of Saints* (p. 26), must find a response and touch a chord in every human breast. But they do not convey a sentiment which is confined to Christianity. Did not even the Gentiles the same? "O Laggus, my son, thy mother asks thee that thou wouldst take me where thou art"; "Be kind to thy mother and father and sister Marina, that they may be able to perform religious rites for thee when I am gone"³.

¹ Vide supra, p. 29.

² Vide supra, p. 45.

³ "Lagge fili . . . mater tua rogat te ut mead te recipias," Orelli, *Collectio Inscript. Lat. I. L.* (1828), 4755 ; "Parce matrem tuam et patrem et sororem tuam Marinam ut possent tibi facere post me solemniam," *ibid.* 6206. Cf. Lucius, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

Such feelings and such expressions may be cultivated without much danger in private by those who feel the compulsion of the human instinct from which they spring, but they are not for public use; they are indeed from the nature of the case not capable of incorporation into the common worship of the Church.

APPENDIX

(See p. 62)

THE discovery of the bodies of SS. Protasius and Gervasius at Milan in the year 386 deserves a somewhat fuller treatment than was possible in the text, not so much because of the claim which is made for it to a place among authentic miracles (cf. e. g. Newman, *Essays on Miracles*, p. 348 ff., 2nd ed. 1870), but because the account commonly given of it involves S. Ambrose in a charge of fraud. The charge was brought against him, tentatively and with evident reluctance by Dr. Thomas Hodgkin (cf. *Italy and her Invaders*, 1892,² i, p. 440), and it has been recently renewed with uncompromising vehemence by Dr. Rendel Harris who, with perhaps more courage than discretion, deliberately calls him "a body snatcher" (cf. *The Dioscuri in the Christian Legends*, 1903, pp. 42-51, and *The Cult of the Heavenly Twins*, 1906, pp. 80-95).

While agreeing with Dr. Hodgkin that in this matter "we seem to be shut up to one of two alternatives, miracle or fraud", I cannot but think that a careful review of S. Ambrose's own narrative exonerates him from deceit.

The circumstances of the discovery are familiar to all readers of Gibbon (cf. *Decline and Fall*, ed. Bury, vol. iii, p. 160), and it is not necessary to repeat them here. But S. Ambrose's words to his sister Marcellina deserve consideration.

"Cum ego basilicam dedicassem multi tanquam uno ore interpellare coeperunt dicentes: sicut Romanam basilicam dedices. Respondi: Faciam, si martyrum reliquias inuenero. Statimque subiit ueluti cuiusdam ardor presagii¹." Then follows the account of the finding of the two gigantic bodies, of miracles which accompanied the event, and of the recovery of the martyrs' names by some old men of the multitude. (*Ep.* xxii.)

Two points are to be observed, (1) the popular demand that the bishop should consecrate the Church as he had consecrated the Roman Church, and (2) his answer, "I will do so if I find relics of martyrs." It has been suggested that the Church was called *Romana* because it stood near the *porta Romana*. But the term might equally well denote a Roman church, i. e. a church having something Roman about it. Now Pontificals of the tenth century seem to regard consecration with relics as a characteristically Roman use.

¹ The statement of S. Augustine (who was himself a witness of the alleged miracles, cf. *Confess.* ix. 47; *De civ. Dei*, xxii. 8) that S. Ambrose was warned by a dream must not be pressed. In any case it is a natural and perfectly innocent "improvement" on S. Ambrose's words.

And the inference acquires certainty when we find an English fourteenth-century Pontifical in which the Roman manner of consecration with relics appears as an alternative to the English use without them.¹

I would suggest that by *basilica romana* in this passage of S. Ambrose's letter is meant a church consecrated after the Roman manner (*more romano*), and that his answer implies that he was willing to follow the Roman custom and consecrate with relics *if he found them*, but that he was not going out of his way to supply them. The prophetic glow of which he speaks might very well be his own analysis of his feelings on the occasion in the light of subsequent events.

If this interpretation be correct, it removes from S. Ambrose, not indeed the imputation of credulity (in this respect he was certainly not in

¹ Cf. W. H. Frere, *Pontifical Services* (Alcuin Club Publications, 1901), pp. 4, 35, &c., and E. S. Dewick, *On a MS. Pontifical of a Bishop of Metz of the fourteenth century*, 1895, p. 6 (reprinted from *Archaeologia*, vol. liv, pp. 414-24) and his note in Bishop John Wordsworth's *Lecture On the rite of Consecration of Churches*, (Church Hist. Society's Publications, LII, pp. 22, 23). This *mos romanus* must have grown up in the course of the fourth century, for in 308 we find Marcellus of Rome dedicating a church in his own name, and therefore, probably, apart from relics (cf. *Liber Pontificalis*, s. v. Marcellus). May it not have been due to the known zeal of Constantine and Helena in the matter of relics, and to the special care which that emperor bestowed on the remains of the Apostles at the Vatican, S. Paolo, &c. ?

advance of his age), but the stigma of fraud. That there was imposture is probable, but it was, I hold, on the part of the populace anxious to seal their cause by signs and wonders. The suggestion of relics comes from the people, the identification of the bodies is made by the people. S. Ambrose in this case may have been the dupe, but he was not the cheat.



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